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The Shape of Things

✶

THE APPOINTMENT OF SOLICITOR GENERAL Stanley F. Reed to the Supreme Court comes as a reward for services rendered the Administration. Mr. Reed is a good legal technician and one who labored mightily to convince the Supreme Court that the New Deal administrative efforts could be rephrased in constitutional terminology and given a place in the respected file of past precedents without undue violence to the judicial mind. A man with such abilities, the President may have reasoned, clearly belongs on the court, where he will appreciate the arduous efforts of subsequent Solicitor Generals to make the living economic and administrative realities square with the formulas of past decisions. Even more persuasive may have been the fact that Mr. Reed, in the words of one of his colleagues in the Department of Justice, "is not a professional New Dealer." We are a bit mystified by the allusion, but presume it refers to some of the more progressive candidates who had been discussed. The appointment met with an immediate favorable response from many of the Senate liberals, who called Mr. Reed a "liberal," and from most of the conservatives, who called him "an able lawyer of the conservative type." Mr. Roosevelt has, in short, made an appointment calculated to soothe the opposition while giving the progressive wing of his party no tangible reason for protest. For while Mr. Reed's liberalism is putative, his conservatism is equally nebulous. The fact is, he has had no clear chance to demonstrate either quality clearly, and the question remains: for what social ends will he use his technical abilities? It is no reflection on Mr. Reed to say that he probably owes his elevation more to the President's determination to undo the damage he has suffered from the storm over Justice Black than to any desire in the White House to assure a genuinely progressive court.

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MR. ROOSEVELT'S SWOLLEN VISITING LIST of big-business executives during the whole of last week may mean any one of a number of things. It may mean that the President is determined to carry through some of the policies he and his lieutenants have been talking about, and that he is choosing the personal conference as his vehicle for breaking the news to the big boys. It may mean that the President is still exactly where he started in the days of the NRA, and is laying plans with

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the industrial leaders for some fresh variation on the old theme of "industrial self-government." Or it may mean neither of these, but merely that the President is puzzled and worried and marking time. We tend to the view that Mr. Roosevelt's eclecticism is such that all three of the above possibilities contain elements of truth. The signs point to the use of taxation in the long run to relax the grip of the holding companies, without, however, giving more than rhetorical force to Mr. Roosevelt's sensational remark about doing away with all holding companies. But the signs point also to business-labor agreements to stabilize employment on the one hand and halt demands for wage increases on the other. It is significant in this connection that Mr. Lewis and Mr. Murray appeared as labor representatives alongside the industrial and banking magnates. What distinguished the discussions from previous NRA conferences, of which many members of the group are veterans, remains to be seen. Meanwhile the testimony of business leaders at the hearing of the Senate Committee on Unemployment must have made it abundantly clear to the Senators that business men are as innocent of real knowledge of the larger processes of industry as are Senators themselves.

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THE STIFFENING OF CHINESE RESISTANCE IN Shantung is but one of many signs of growing unity within China in the struggle against Japanese aggression. Even more significant facts are the transfer of veteran Communist troops to the south and the striking victories achieved by the Eighth Route Army in Shansi. The execution of Chu Min-yu, former general secretary of the Executive Yuan, and Han Fu-chu, former Governor of Shantung, for cowardice gives further support to the belief that Chiang has decided to continue resistance until Japan is either economically exhausted or becomes engaged in a struggle with some major power. Despite the huge losses suffered in the past six months, China is in many ways stronger than at any previous time. The Japanese have been trapped into extending their lines into greater areas than they can possibly control. Guerrilla tactics have immobilized large detachments not only in Shansi, Suiyuan, and parts of Hopei, where the Eighth Route Army has operated, but also in the area around Nanking. A steady stream of supplies and modern aircraft appears to be coming in through Hongkong and French Indo-China. Moreover, there are increasing indications of Japanese disunity. The failure of the imperial conference to announce an immediate decision on policy concerning China may be due, as Tokyo implies, to a desire to await Chiang's answer to a Japanese peace offer, but it suggests with more likelihood serious differences on basic policy.

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A FRONT-PAGE STORY IN THE NEW YORK *Times* reports that Japanese industrial interests have approached American business men for a $50,000,000 loan "for the purchase of machinery." Since credits for war purposes are unobtainable because of Japan's shaky financial position, the borrowers are making a vigorous effort to give the proposal financial and moral respectability by asserting that the machinery is to be used solely for the development of Manchurian industries. It is even intimated, but not stated categorically, that American engineers might accompany the shipment to see that it is actually installed in Manchuria. While the story carefully avoids all reference to political factors, it rather opportunely kills two birds with one stone. It suggests that Japan is strong enough to turn attention to the development of Manchoukuo at this time, and gives the impression that the Open Door is about to be restored in that unhappy country. But our suspicions are aroused by the fact that the head of the syndicate requesting funds is Yoshisuke Aikawa, chief supporter of fascism among the business leaders of Japan. Aikawa, more than any other one person, is responsible for the remarkable development of Japanese heavy industry in recent years; and he is credited with a dominant role in throwing the support of these interests behind the army's expansionist policies. With such a tie-up, one cannot be blamed for suspecting that there is a very interesting story involving the proposed loan which is not set forth in the *Times*. We shall make it our business to try to unearth it.

✶

THE BUDAPEST CONFERENCE OFFERS A new ray of hope to those who believe that the tide is turning against the fascist international. Although the official statement issued at the close of the parley reaffirmed the close cooperation of Austria and Hungary with the Rome-Berlin axis, which representatives of those two countries referred to as "a guaranty of peace and reconstruction," Count Ciano failed in his effort to persuade them to withdraw from the League and to join the "anti-Communist" pact. After Teruel recognition of the Franco regime in Spain gave the appearance of a rather forlorn effort to bolster up the prestige of the weakening rebel cause. The gesture appears even less significant when it is realized that Franco has maintained diplomatic representatives in Vienna and Budapest since last September. No one expects Austria or Hungary to line up with the democracies on any crucial issue, but their failure to toe the mark for Mussolini indicates a wariness which is particularly welcome after recent developments in Rumania. It demonstrates once more the potential influence which the democratic powers might still exercise in European affairs.

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THE FAILURE OF PRIVATE MEDICINE TO meet the health requirements of the American public has never been more clearly demonstrated than in the preliminary report of the National Institute of Health. After a house-to-house investigation of 740,000 families in 84 cities, the institute found that sickness disabled twice as many persons in families on relief as in families with incomes of $2,000 or more. Individuals in the relief families were disabled, on the average, three times as many days per year as individuals in the upper income

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groups. The rate of disability among families not on relief but with incomes of less than $1,000 a year was found to be more than twice as high as the rate among families in the highest income category. Yet the latter received 46 per cent more care from a physician for each case of illness. Families with incomes of more than $3,000 were twelve times as likely as relief families to have the services of a private nurse in a case of serious illness. We may assume from these figures that if the same type of medical care were available to the whole population as is now available to families with incomes of more than $3,000 we could cut the amount of illness in this country by approximately 33 per cent. This would mean a gain, according to the survey, of approximately 415,000,000 days of health a year, or three and one-third for every person in the United States—a sufficient inducement, we believe, for revitalizing existing efforts to improve our outworn system of medical care.

*

THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IS SELDOM MORE grotesque than in its periodic protests against "foreign criticism." So abundant is Germany's export trade of violent propaganda that these outcries are as arrogant as they are transparent. William E. Dodd, retiring American ambassador to Germany, has once more wounded Nazi sensibility, an offense rendered especially significant by his having had so outstanding an opportunity to observe the new Germany at first hand. He saw, as he recalled in his New York address last week, how men were "denied religious, personal, and press freedom, how universities and schools were put under party control, and how almost as many personal opponents were killed in five years as Charles II had executed in twenty years of the seventeenth century." It was an impressive indictment. Even more damaging was Mr. Dodd's reminder of the reckless attacks against the democracies delivered by high Nazi officials at Nürnberg and elsewhere. Needless to say, these attacks on the United States were never suppressed in American journals, as Mr. Roosevelt's speeches are now being banned in Germany, or condensed into three lines, as the German papers have done with Mr. Dodd's remarks. The Nazis will do well to drop the subject. Their most recent outcry comes appropriately at the moment when the propaganda they have subsidized in Yugoslavia has succeeded in driving the last Jewish representative out of the parliament at Belgrade.

*

IT WOULD BE IDLE TO PRETEND THAT the service on American ships is all that it should be. But it is both dishonest and futile to center the blame for inferior service and outright abuses on ships' crews and on the unions to which many of them belong. The fact is that the maritime unions which became firmly established as a result of the 1934 and subsequent strikes have put an end to many abuses. Another important fact is that adequate laws for enforcing discipline are already on the statute books. The trouble lies elsewhere. Marine ownership in this country is shot through with the corruption that goes with huge indirect subsidies and the fight for profits. Daniel C. Roper's bureau of inspection has never fulfilled its function when the function went against the interests of the shipowners. And in particular the living conditions of mere seamen have been the last consideration, though the government has poured millions into the industry. The remedy does not lie in crippling the unions. The testimony of irate passengers is being given a big play in hearings in Washington in connection with possible changes in the maritime laws, especially as regards labor. The C. I. O. is protesting that much of this testimony is false and stating the case for its members. It is a good case, backed by official reports on the state of our merchant marine. Seamen are not perfect, but passengers with personal grievances are easily found. Certainly their testimony must not be used as a basis for laws which would hamstring the unions and leave the basic situation untouched.

*

RECENT UNPUBLISHED INFORMATION CLEARS up a doubt regarding Italian intervention in Spain. In November reports appeared in the European press about the repatriation of Italian troops, said to have been transported from Spain to the Italian colony of Libya. At the same time Mussolini's representative on the London Non-Intervention Committee minimized the presence of Roman soldiers in Franco's ranks and announced officially that only 40,000 Italians were in the Spanish army. Had Mussolini really taken the non-intervention debating club seriously enough to withdraw his army from Spain? Not at all. But he did consider British pressure for withdrawal serious enough to cloak his activities. We now learn that 8,000 Negro and Arab troops from Libya recently arrived at Melilla, Spanish Morocco, where they were housed in newly built barracks; and that 900 Tripolitans disembarked from a Nazi steamer at Malaga on December 29. The reason for substituting colonials for white Italians is obvious: the Libyans can be taken for Moors. The Non-Intervention Committee has never even considered evacuating Moors from Spain, although under the Algeciras treaty the Moors are non-Spanish. The French oppose such a move because if the Moors of Spanish Morocco are not Spaniards, it follows that the Moors of French Morocco are not French—a conclusion that would rule out the future use of French colonials in Europe. For Mussolini an additional advantage of sending Africans to Spain is that reports of their casualties and the return of their wounded will not cause discontent in Italian cities and villages.

*

"THOSE REDS ARE TRYING TO CONVINCE the country that I'm a tyrant and a dictator . . . the people have invested me with . . . power, and I am applying it for the benefit of the people." This was the beginning of an inimitable interview last week with Frank Hague, in which Jersey City's mayor tried to convince the country that there is no ground for comparing him with Hitler and Mussolini. When asked if it were not a vio-

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lation of civil rights to expel men arbitrarily from the city without bringing them into court, Mr. Hague replied, "No. They went peacefully, didn't they?" He denied charges that he had brought pressure to bear on owners of private halls to prevent their lease for C. I. O. meetings but said he "thought it natural" that the owners should refuse their halls to groups hostile to the local administration. Right to the end the interview was so convincing that we found ourselves tracing a fascist chin and a Nazi mustache on the latest newspaper photograph of the Jersey Terror before throwing it into the wastebasket. Meanwhile we had been wondering just how happy the happy workers of Jersey City are under Mayor Hague's I-am-the-lawship. We read that while Hague waves the flag all city employees have been asked to waive their right to full pay in order that reductions of 15 to 23 per cent made last spring might continue in effect. We were also told by William J. Carney of the New Jersey C. I. O. that 292,000 workers in New Jersey receive less than the state minimum of $17, that 45,300 of these draw from $5 to $7.99 a week, that 34,000 get less than $5, and that in many Jersey City establishments workers get $3, $4, and $5 a week. He also said that 150,000 New Jersey workers and even some employers had succumbed to the alien blandishments of the C. I. O. That threatening fact and the horrible example of what happened to Tammany may explain why the political boss of one of the oldest of our sweatshop states has been perspiring so heavily since the C. I. O. sent him a Bill of Rights, collect.

The Fall of France's Popular Front

WITH the collapse of the second Popular Front government France has slipped back to the political uncertainty of pre-Popular Front days. Despite their overwhelming majority in the Chamber, the left parties, as in 1932-36, have found it difficult to work together. As a result, France came perilously near having a right government under Bonnet, and has in prospect at the moment a makeshift ministry which is a far cry from the vigorous left Cabinet with which Blum started two years ago.

It is easy to say that the Popular Front was bound to disintegrate as soon as the immediate menace of fascism was removed. There was little to unite two such different parties as the middle-class Radical Socialists and the Communists except the fear of an immediate fascist coup. Once that fear was lifted, it was inevitable that the two would clash on fundamental issues of both domestic and foreign policy. But to lay too much stress on this point is to ignore the fact that the threat of fascism in the international sphere is far greater today than it was in 1936. And it is precisely in this respect that the Popular Front has suffered its greatest failure.

If it is true that the Communists were first to desert the Popular Front, in spirit if not in votes, it was because the Spanish policy of both the Blum and the Chautemps government aided rather than curbed the growing menace of fascism. The lack of a strong Foreign Minister, like Briand or Barthou, to lead rather than follow England, has probably contributed more to the disintegration of the left coalition than doctrinal disputes over domestic policy.

It cannot be denied, however, that the Chautemps government was afflicted with the same sort of paralysis in the domestic field that ruined Ramsay MacDonald, and that to a certain extent hampers the New Deal. Any attempt to push through basic reforms for the protection of the working class while clinging to laissez faire economics is bound to fail. The Conservative Party of Great Britain has pushed through more reforms than either the Liberal or the Labor Party precisely because it made no effort to insist on the forms of laissez faire. In demanding exchange restrictions the French Socialists and Communists appear to recognize the necessity for economic controls even under capitalism, but the Radicals have found it extremely difficult to throw aside their traditional policies. This divergence of principle is probably the greatest weakness of the Popular Front as a practical bulwark against fascism. It is difficult to form a coalition to save traditional democracy without accepting, as a more or less unwelcome guest, democracy's shadow in the economic sphere—the doctrine of laissez faire.

Given these problems, it is difficult to be optimistic regarding the prospects of a new French Cabinet. There is no indication that it will be more realistic in either domestic or foreign policies. Broadening the base of the government may give it more initial support, but it adds to the number of issues on which internal disagreement may arise. An election at this time would be of little value, since it would probably bring only slight, if any, changes in the relative strength of the various parties. Unless unexpected leadership develops from within the ranks of the Popular Front, there is grave danger that France may become progressively more disorganized until it faces once more an immediate threat of civil war.

Squabble in the C. I. O.

WHEN two C. I. O. leaders like John L. Lewis and David Dubinsky begin airing their dissensions in public, as they have been doing, it is a cause for concern to all friends of labor. For it gives aid and comfort to labor's enemies and it diverts the energies of the leaders. Yet we are not seriously worried by the quarrel itself. Such squabbles are signs that a growing young labor movement has not yet petrified. If they did not crop out at this point in labor history, we should begin to suspect that machine dictatorship was suppressing them. For in building a new unionism, harmony is possible only in the arc of great and rapid growth. When the growth is halted, as it has been now by the depression, then the disparate elements of

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personal temperament, trade-union tactics, and social philosophy are bound to emerge to view. That is what Mr. Dubinsky means when he says that the C. I. O. honeymoon is now over.

Mr. Dubinsky's charges turn on Mr. Lewis's role in the peace negotiations with the A. F. of L. We may dismiss the rhetoric that has been bandied about, because Mr. Lewis would agree that "no man has a mortgage on the labor movement" and Mr. Dubinsky would agree that it is not "peace at any price" that he wants with the A. F. of L. What it all comes down to is differing versions of what happened during the peace negotiations and a difference of opinion as to what constitutes an "honorable peace."

Mr. Dubinsky accuses Mr. Lewis of not having tried hard enough to effect peace, and of not having followed up offers that might have constituted the basis of peace. There is no record available, unfortunately, to indicate what peace terms were actually offered or why the negotiations failed. No records were kept, and the A. F. of L. delegates were understood to have objected to a joint public statement of the terms discussed. But we do have the statements of Philip Murray, head of the Steel Workers' Union and chairman of the C. I. O. peace delegates —a person with a mind of his own and a will for realism. And from his comments several things are clear. The A. F. of L. delegates were at every point extremely vague; nor was it even certain that they had been given authority by the Executive Council to negotiate a peace. The basic C. I. O. condition was that all their members were to be reaffiliated, that where they had a preponderant strength their unions were to receive recognition along with the recognition of the principle of industrial unionism. Any situations in which serious jurisdictional differences existed were to be settled by negotiation between the two unions, and the C. I. O. leaders understood that they would have to make considerable concessions in this respect. The A. F. of L. delegates, on the other hand, insisted that they would not take back any except the original ten C. I. O. unions and that the remaining twenty-two unions that have joined the C. I. O. in the past two years would be enabled to come back only when they had reached an agreement with the corresponding A. F. of L. union leaders.

On several points there is considerable doubt. It is not clear whether the twenty-two C. I. O. unions were to come back singly or whether after negotiating singly they were to be readmitted as a group. It is not clear by what methods these agreements were to be reached: while there was some talk of appointing impartial arbitrators, this was never made definite. Finally, there was never any explicit statement as to the method by which the A. F. of L. Executive Council, which had enlarged its powers for disciplining the member unions, was to strip itself of those powers again. Clearly these enlarged powers would be a continuing threat to the C. I. O. unions returning under any arrangement.

The great weakness in Mr. Dubinsky's contention is that no evidence has been offered indicating that the A. F. of L. showed any inclination for an "honorable peace." And the reason is clear. The Executive Council feared that it would be overwhelmed by the new membership that would come pouring in from the C. I. O. It preferred, in Mr. Lewis's phraseology, to take back only what it could digest, and the members of the Executive Council seized the present occasion for a showdown because they felt that the depression gave them the whip hand. The depression is hitting the heavy industries, and therefore the C. I. O., first; the A. F. of L., being more institutionalized, is less dependent upon the size and welfare of its rank-and-file membership.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Mr. Dubinsky's intentions, but the effect of his indictment will be other than what he intends. He has already become the darling of the editorial writers of the conservative press, which may be relied on to extend an eager welcome to those who stir up a tempest within union ranks. What is clearly necessary is that any evidence Mr. Dubinsky and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Murray and others may have should be presented to an impartial committee of the C. I. O.'s undoubted friends. The shouting of dictatorship and Communist influence in the C. I. O. may be useful in the political situation that Mr. Dubinsky finds in his own union, but it cannot do him or anyone else any credit. As president of the I. L. G. W. U. he is caught between the pressure of thirty-one vice-presidents, many of them under the influence of anti-C. I. O. sentiment such as is represented in the group clustering around the *Jewish Daily Forward,* an Old Guard Socialist paper. These groups are basically A. F. of L. in their thinking, and it would be unfortunate if Mr. Dubinsky, reacting to such pressure, should forget that there is a basic difference between the old unionism of the A. F. of L. and the new unionism of the C. I. O.

This whole dispute will be determined less by recriminations and accusations than by what the next few months will add to the volume of unemployment. If the C. I. O. unions are hit even harder than they have been thus far, the negotiations for a labor peace will undoubtedly be reopened and pushed to a conclusion regardless of personalities, but it is well to remember that the labor movement today is being split by the same basic cleavages that are splitting the Democratic Party. In both instances there are cries of communism and dictatorship. Mr. Lewis, like Mr. Roosevelt, undoubtedly has a flair for power and at times he sees the labor movement and himself in organic terms. We should be the first to say that the new unionism cannot grow to a healthy stature unless democratic checks are placed on him as well as on any other leader. The true health of American labor can lie only in its being thoroughly democratic. As for the charges of communism, they are as absurd when leveled against Mr. Lewis as they are when leveled against Mr. Roosevelt. The need of the hour is for firmness of tactics, militancy of effort, and the achievement of a unity that will not undo the great work of the past two years. Otherwise, at the very moment when labor needs its greatest strength because capitalism is breaking down, it will find itself without a fighting spirit and without a decisive social program.

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France in Crisis

BY M. E. RAVAGE

THE first Popular Front government was overthrown from without; the second collapsed from within. Last June it was the defeated minority that struck the blow at Léon Blum; on Friday Camille Chautemps surrendered to the left wing of his own majority.

On the surface the two events are quite unrelated. In fact the one followed logically and inevitably from the other. With the departure of Blum from the Hotel Matignon and the arrival of Bonnet in the rue de Rivoli, the soul had gone out of the left coalition. Thenceforward it was a matter of time when one or another of the component parties would find courage to pronounce the coroner's verdict. Repeatedly in the last six months the moment seemed to be at hand. Each time it was averted through fear of the consequences.

Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, I venture to say that Yvon Delbos and the foreign policy of the Chautemps Cabinet had at least as much to do with the crisis as Georges Bonnet, the instability of the franc, and the renewed wave of sitdown strikes. M. Bonnet was less reluctant to go than he cared to admit. The Socialists, on the other hand, would have greatly preferred to let well enough alone. This is not saying that Bonnet did not want to remain Finance Minister or even to become Premier, that Blum was not serious about exchange control, or that the Communists were indifferent about the "pause" degenerating into a standstill. The truth is that ever since his entry into the Cabinet Bonnet had dreamed and labored to head the next combination. Unhappily his much-advertised wizardry in finance did not measure up in practice to his task. He balanced the budget on paper. But despite his efforts, capital continued to emigrate, and the franc which he had set afloat sank lower than it had sunk since 1926. He sought an alibi for his failure, not without some justification, in the monetary agitation of the Socialists, in the intrigues of the Communists, and in the supposedly political labor unrest. But the Chamber was what the election had made it; so that it was not without relief that, failing to oust the Communists from the majority and fill their place with the Flandin-Reynaud Democratic Alliance, he saw an opening to leave with honor. His acceptance of President Lebrun's offer to form a new government was, he well knew, a gesture that deceived no one, since even his own party would not stand by him.

Technically, the Socialists upset the government by withdrawing their ministers from the coalition. But they did so under duress. In the present state of labor opinion it would have been not far removed from political suicide for them to withhold solidarity from their fellow-Marxists. Blum and his party had more reason than the Radical Socialists for being weary of the latter-day tactics of the Communists. Blum had known for an entire year the taste of Thorez-Duclos backing, which consisted of support in the Chamber and opposition outside. He liked no better than Chautemps the Communists' flirtations with clericalism and the "outstretched hand" to the Pope. And his party watched with uneasiness the maneuvers of their Communist "brothers" to bring about unity with the Socialist masses over the heads of the leaders. But precisely this last strategy made any appearance of Blum's compromising with Bonnet a mortal danger for the very existence of the Socialist Party.

The curious fact is that for more than five months Thorez and Duclos let the Socialists fight the Finance Minister single-handed. Their own sector was the Quai d'Orsay. They battled with Delbos-Blum for not retiring Alexis Léger, the permanent chief of the department. They sulked when Delbos-Chautemps met Chamberlain-Eden in London over the head of Moscow. And when Delbos made his swing around the circle recently and failed to include Russia in his itinerary, they vowed vengeance. There can be little doubt that some of the recent strikes were provoked by them for foreign-political objects. But Chautemps and Bonnet are mistaken if they imagine that the entire strike wave is of Communist inspiration. They need only compare the increases in wages and in living costs for the past year and a half to be convinced of their error.

It is extremely unlikely that Delbos will be Foreign Minister in the next government. But unless Thorez himself obtains that portfolio—which I think highly improbable—the new head of the Quai d'Orsay can scarcely be expected to adopt a very different policy toward the U. S. S. R. from that of his predecessor. The key to that difficulty lies not in Paris but in London.

The crisis as a whole promises not to be easy to resolve. Herriot, whom the Communists would like above everyone else, wants to succeed Lebrun in the Presidency, and has a veritable phobia for the Premiership. Daladier has declined the honor. Blum, having rallied to the "Van Zeeland formula"—national union under left leadership—advanced by L. O. Frossard (Ex-Communist, ex-Socialist, and a minister in the last Laval Cabinet) has tried and failed, and as I write Chautemps is once more trying his hand.

There remain two other possibilities—Flandin or new elections. I incline to the former, eventually if not at once, as the likelier solution. A new election would scarcely change the complexion of the Chamber; the nation continues faithful to the Popular Front. And the country has already had more turmoil than it needs or can afford.

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Cities That Consume Men

BY HAROLD WARD

AMERICAN cities are on the march. True, most of them do not know where they are going, and those that do are weighed down by such a pack of troubles—technical, economic, financial, administrative, and social—that their progress suggests comparison with those "Deserts on the March" so vividly portrayed for us by Paul B. Sears in his book of that name.

Some twenty years ago Sir Patrick Geddes, one of the founders of the regional-planning movement, warned against the dangers of an urban development that neglected the fundamental question of balance between town and country. He was particularly struck by the enormous human and social waste involved in the cancer-like growth of huge cities—a growth which he dramatized as a regressing cycle in four stages: Megalopolis, Parasitopolis, Patholopolis, Necropolis.

Were Sir Patrick alive today he would find much to confirm and not a little to qualify his fears in the first of a series of monographs to be issued by the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Committee. This report, entitled "Our Cities, Their Role in the National Economy," is the first comprehensive official study of this vital topic since R. D. McKenzie's "Metropolitan Communities," issued as part of ex-President Hoover's inquiry into "Recent Social Trends." As such it is a document of great value and significance—especially to those 70,000,000 or so Americans who today find their destinies linked, for good or evil, to what McKenzie has aptly called the "gravitational field" of the city.

Nowhere has the acceleration of urban life been more marked and decisive than in the United States. A century ago we did not have a single city with 100,000 inhabitants, and a clear nine-tenths of the country's 13,000,000 people were classified as rural. Not until 1880 did the combined forces of industrial expansion, immigration, transportation development, and world markets make New York our first metropolis of a million inhabitants. Today New York is only one of ninety-four cities in the 100,000 class which dominate the economic and social life of nearly one-third of the American people. Another 3,071 communities listed by the census as "urban"—containing 2,500 or more inhabitants—bring the proportion of city dwellers to more than half the total population. All this means that since 1790 our urban population has increased 300 times over, as against a meager 15-fold increase in the rural districts.

Standing alone, facts like the foregoing mean very little. What is important is not the reality of urbanization, whose progress can be observed in every industrialized country, but its characteristics, its problems, and its social consequences as we are beginning to understand them in America. From the mass of contradictory and confused tendencies underlying our urban development three major strands can be disengaged. We have, first, the strikingly uneven regional development of our cities, resulting in part from the physical struggles with what Isaiah Bowman has called the "pioneer fringe" but even more from artificial handicaps imposed by wasteful methods of agriculture and by a socially unsound exploitation of "cheap labor" in the interest of larger industrial and manufacturing profits. Closely associated with this is the second factor in urban concentration, the drift of population away from economically starved rural areas toward a small group of highly congested "metropolitan areas," of which three—New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia—have an aggregate population density of 18,000 per square mile, against the national average of 42. The third factor, dynamically related to the second, is that of dispersion, an outward drift from the central cities into suburbs and satellite areas, of which there are nearly 500 in the New York region alone (a territory embracing 5,000 square miles in three states).

No more eloquent proof of America's failure to balance its rural-urban budget can be found than in the text and photographs of "You Have Seen Their Faces," by Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White. In the region pictured in this book, in and around the southern Appalachians, the triple plagues of resource exhaustion, human exploitation, and political barbarism have reduced the proportion of those living in urban communities to about a third of the population. Mississippi rates a national low of 16.9 per cent, followed by Arkansas and Alabama—the TVA power development and industrial migration from the North are so far little more than shots in the arm of a very sick region. In sharp contrast, the New England states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island are over 90 per cent urban, New York and New Jersey over 80 per cent, and California—thanks largely to Los Angeles and San Francisco—about 75 per cent. An urban development which gives us a range of anywhere from 17 to 95 persons out of 100 living in cities, and this despite amazing technological advances in every field of production and distribution, is certainly nothing to be complacent about.

Outside the thirty-three major industrial areas recognized by the census, millions of Americans, lacking more balanced economic opportunities, look for an escape by drifting first into the great cities, then out again into the neighboring satellite areas. The Urbanism Committee tells us that "nearly one-half of the population lives within a radius of from twenty to fifty miles of cities of over 100,000 inhabitants," and that the percentage of our total population growth absorbed by these cities has increased from 46 per cent in the decade 1890-1900 to

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nearly 75 per cent in the period 1920-30. Commenting on this "urban magnetism" (in the remarkable study of "Migration and Economic Opportunity" by Carter Goodrich and associates) C. Warren Thornthwaite writes that in the twenties "the four areas of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit attracted four and a half millions of people—a figure more than half as great as the total number of people who left the farms for the cities." Metropolitan New York alone absorbed one and a half million; this despite a contrary tendency of the great cities to spill their excess inhabitants into surrounding communities whose "independence" of the center is more an administrative fiction than a social fact.

It is true that both these drifts were partially checked during the depression, but neither town nor country gained by the exposure of (1) the economic and technical incapacity of cities to take care of the millions of people—mostly under twenty-five—who had deserted impoverished rural districts for an imagined future in the Big Town; and (2) a compulsion to "live off the land" entirely out of focus with economic realities. An internal migration movement of nearly 700,000 people a year, most of them merely shuffling along in obedience to forces of which they have no understanding, following the line of least resistance toward the nearest job opportunity, piling up an enormous backlog of housing problems, health and hygiene deficiencies, crime, delinquency, suicide, and destitution—this is the seamy side of the brave outward show of American cities on the march.

It is all very well to say, as Chairman C. A. Dykstra and his associates of the Urbanism Committee declare, that "urbanism is a symptom of national maturity." Sir Patrick Geddes, and long before him Frederick Engels, understood that the real maturity of an industrial society dependent upon technics for its mastery of a physical environment implies "the abolition of the antithesis between town and country." If cities are the nerve junctions of the social organism, responsible for the smooth and prompt transmission of myriad stimuli to the remotest parts of the country, no real health is possible without the type of long-range planning which can integrate a complex of factors into one functioning whole. A balanced town-and-country economy will understand the connection between municipal zoning laws and the industrial possibilities of a large adjacent territory; it will weigh natural against human resources, and oppose to a decentralization which gives this country 175,000 separate governments costing (in 1932) more than four billion dollars some kind of unified but democratic control.

Since we are, so to speak, paying through the nose for the privilege of living in cities which are six parts traffic congestion, three parts living expenses, and about one part all-around satisfaction, we may as well think through the head about our possible urban trends. What is the probable course of urban life in the next generation or so? A shrewd hint on this is provided by a "Memorandum on the Selection of Manufacturing Areas for the Housing Program" submitted by Carter Goodrich and his coworkers to the Suburban Division of the Resettlement Administration. On the safe assumption that population will follow where wage opportunities beckon, and that these latter will accompany manufacturing developments, the "Study of Population Redistribution" group worked out a system of areas that might be expected to assimilate most of our slowly increasing population. It is noticeable that all these areas are in established industrial regions; the fifteen most promising ones, in addition to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit, include the cluster of cities around Bridgeport and Providence, Midwestern communities like Youngstown, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, and one Pacific Coast city, Los Angeles. Baltimore, Cleveland, and San Francisco are second-choice cities, while among the eight that do not deserve official attention at this time we note Indianapolis, Toledo, Rochester (New York), and two vigorous West Coast cities, Seattle and Tacoma. Ignoring size in favor of estimated "job stability," we may expect more urban development in the three Southern cities of Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville—how much is this due to the combination of Northern capital and cheap Southern labor?—in Dallas, and in Denver, a central point in the Western ranch and mining country.

The interesting thing about this forecast based on "the probable stability of employment" is the concentration of possibilities east of the Mississippi: only two of the fifteen best choices—St. Louis and Los Angeles—seem to justify Horace Greeley's dictum, at least on any mass scale. It would appear that economic opportunities, far from becoming more evenly spread over the map, exhibit a centralizing tendency of their own. The half-million or more migrants who annually swarm over the country in search of elementary security must still depend on a relatively small group of what C. S. Stein has called "dinosaur cities"; and when they get there most of them must be prepared to find a heartbreaking assortment of hardships, of which bad housing is only the most conspicuous.

There is no escaping the fact—stressed by the Urbanism Committee—that "the large cities of the country as a whole have grown more rapidly than the small cities." The economic counterpart of this trend is indicated by figures showing that the great metropolitan areas account for from two-thirds to four-fifths of all industrial establishments, all wage-earners and salaried employees, all wholesale trade, and the value of all industrial production. This tremendous concentration of our productive forces within a relatively small area—10 per cent of the people of the country are living on .02 per cent of its surface—is a basic problem of our time. How to solve it, how to transform our cities from mere manufacturing centers or trading posts to well-rounded communities linked in a network of intelligently planned social services, is something for the entire American public, not merely planners and engineers, to worry about.

One point, at least, is clearly brought out by the preliminary report of the Urbanism Committee. It is that the entire urban development of the country got off to a bad start. Our first cities found their own economic and social level in accordance with a relatively simple econ-

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omy based on agriculture and maritime commerce. With the opening up of a fabulously rich continent there came an attitude of reckless, devil-may-care exploitation: natural resources were inexhaustible, human resources could be had from a stricken Europe; mix them both together with a proper eye on the main chance of profit, and the rest would take care of itself.

It has—with the result that American cities, despite amazing technical facilities, quite justify their description as "consumers of men." Having to a great degree grown at the expense of their rural environment and in isolation from it, they have become social liabilities where they should be assets. Valuations imposed by a competitive agricultural and industrial economy have set one region against another; so that the very idea of obtaining a genuine balance seems utopian.

Too utopian, perhaps, for the National Resources Committee, whose "recommendations," eleven in number, stay well within the safety zone of more and more facts, more and more education, more and more cooperation with agencies, public and private, hopelessly prevented from taking any drastic, long-range action.

Memphis Is Safe for Ford

BY GEORGE LAMBERT

"I HAVE seen a man as gentle and as deserving of the protection of the law as you and I, whose head was hammered to a bloody pulp with an iron hammer on the main street of a great American city in plain view of many witnesses . . . but because the man was a union organizer, no arrests were made." The words are those of J. Warren Madden, chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, speaking before the United States Conference of Mayors; the "great American city" to which he referred is Memphis, Tennessee; and the man whose "head was hammered to a bloody pulp with an iron hammer" is Norman Smith, organizer for the United Automobile Workers of America. Unfortunately Chairman Madden did not give the facts behind the attack on Norman Smith. If he had, he would have laid bare a lamentable state of affairs in the city of Memphis—political bossism, police brutality, wholesale violations of civil liberties, and corporation domination of the city government.

On September 18 of last year Mayor Watkins Overton announced to Memphis newspapermen, "Imported C. I. O. agitators, Communists, and highly paid professional organizers are not wanted in Memphis. They will not be tolerated." Police Commissioner Davis indorsed the Mayor's remarks and added, "We know Norman Smith and his whereabouts and will take care of that situation very soon." Three days later the "situation" had been "taken care of." Norman Smith was in a Memphis hospital being treated for cuts and bruises caused by a beating administered by at least twelve men using empty bottles and cables. From the hospital he was taken to jail. On the same day Charles Phillips, a Memphis resident and an employee of the Ford assembly plant who had been active in organizational work, was also beaten. Prior to that time Ben McCullough, a Ford worker, had twice been beaten.

After his release from jail on the following morning Smith decided to take his case and that of the automobile workers to the people of Memphis by means of the radio. During the next two weeks he arranged for a series of broadcasts over station WMPS and made one radio talk. Meanwhile the police made a pretense of investigating his beating, the American Civil Liberties Union offered a $1,000 reward for the apprehension and conviction of his assailants, and the Automobile Workers sent three organizers from St. Louis as reinforcements.

On October 5, while on his way to the radio station for his second broadcast, Norman Smith was dragged from his car by six or seven men, slugged over the head with a pistol butt, and beaten with a hammer and pistols so brutally that he had to be treated for fifteen cuts, one of which required twenty-four stitches. His companion, Harry Elder, beaten less severely, managed to reach the radio station, where he made the talk Smith had intended to make. The police have the license number of one of the automobiles used by the thugs, and there were several eyewitnesses to both of Smith's beatings, but if any arrests have been made, the fact hasn't been published.

The Ford Motor Company has tried to prevent the organization of its outlying assembly plants by the same methods that it has used at the giant Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, methods which were outlined in the decision against the Ford Company recently handed down by the NLRB. These include the establishment of company unions, the open flouting of the principle of collective bargaining, the use of thugs to coerce workers and to beat organizers, and the use of the machinery of the city government both to assure the immunity of the thugs and to harass union workers with false arrests and police intimidation. But while in Dearborn the Ford Company has for some time completely controlled the political machinery of the city, in other cities it has had to persuade local officials either to give active aid in opposing organization or at least to remain passive while Ford agents took the necessary steps. The threat of moving the huge Ford pay roll elsewhere seems to have been sufficient in most instances to make officials decide to "cooperate."

This threat has certainly worked in Dallas, where in

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the past six months eighteen persons suspected of being interested in C. I. O. unionism have been beaten and not a single conviction has been obtained. In Kansas City the Ford Company closed its assembly plant early in the autumn and announced that it would remain closed unless the city could guarantee "proper protection to Ford employees." It was only reopened after City Manager McElroy went to Dearborn and evidently gave such a guaranty. Since his visit city police have been used as strike-breakers. Many Memphis citizens believe that the city government made an agreement with Ford that not only the Ford plant but also the giant new Firestone Tire Company plant should be kept unorganized. This plant, scheduled to open soon and to employ 5,000 or more workers, is requiring that all applicants for jobs must have been born in Shelby County, that is, in Memphis. With its opening Firestone's chief production center will no longer be Akron, Ohio, where the Rubber Workers' Union is very strong.

For more than twenty years Memphis has been ruled by a political machine headed by Boss Ed Crump. The influence of the Crump machine extends to the courts and the schools, and particularly to federal and state patronage; and until recently it took in the labor movement. The chief agency for suppressing any anti-Crump tendencies which may now and then spring up is the police force, headed by Chief Will Lee, one of the South's most notorious red-baiters. Chief Lee has used his police force to raid, twice, the offices of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, to break up picket lines, to raid and suppress meetings of the Workers' Alliance, and to jail anyone whom he labels a "Communist," which means apparently anyone interested in a labor organization not bearing the stamp of Crump approval.

To illustrate the police tactics of the Crump machine: during the 1936 political campaign I found it necessary to go to the Memphis police department to secure permission for Mrs. Kate Bradford Stockton, Socialist candidate for Governor of Tennessee, to speak in Memphis parks. Lee asked me first why we had held "a secret meeting" the night before, referring to an informal public meeting at which reporters were present. I assured him that the meeting had not been secret, but wanted to know if he proposed to forbid secret meetings. The Chief disregarded this question completely and told me that he knew that the meeting had been secret since he had a man covering it who reported that he couldn't get in. He then warned me that he could not guarantee police protection to Mrs. Stockton if she said anything against Gordon Browning, the Crump candidate for governor. Permission to use the parks was granted only after the Commissioner of Public Safety arrived and gave Lee instruction to issue our permits. Even then Lee made a final "telling" observation; after I had referred to Mrs. Stockton as "Comrade Stockton," he turned to the Public Safety Commissioner and remarked, "See there. They call each other 'Comrade.' Wasn't I telling you that them and the Communists are the same thing?"

In January of 1937 Memphis police arrested Herbert Harris, Socialist Party organizer, at a meeting of the Workers' Alliance where he was to show a labor film. I found out about the arrest a short time later and went over to the jail to learn the nature of the charges. The desk sergeant said they hadn't decided on the charge. A plain-clothes man standing behind the sergeant then wanted to know who I was. When I told him that I was a Socialist organizer associated with Harris, he said, "We'd better hold you, too," and took me back to a cell. The next morning in court when charges were read I discovered that I had violated a fire ordinance and that Harris had operated a motion-picture machine without a license and had also violated a fire ordinance. We were released in court, but when Harris, accompanied by a Memphis attorney, went to the office of Chief Lee to reclaim his sound truck and motion-picture apparatus, Lee gave him twenty minutes to get out of town. He said that if Harris was not out of town in that time he would arrest him for vagrancy, and if that charge didn't stick he'd arrest him for being a suspicious character, and if that didn't stick he'd arrest him for having an improper license on his truck and keep on arresting him until he would be glad to get out of town.

After the police had disposed of Norman Smith, they turned to the Communists and arrested W. H. Spradling, organizer for the Communist Party, in his room at the Y. M. C. A., where he had been living for three months. Charged with vagrancy and with being a suspicious character, Spradling was fined $25 on the first charge and $50 on the second. As he was unable to pay the fine at the time, he was sent to the workhouse, where he remained for more than a week, until his organization was able to raise the money. A short time later Police Chief Lee called to his office H. L. Mitchell and Newell Fowler, secretary and attorney, respectively, of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. In an affidavit to the La Follette committee, Mitchell states that the police chief threatened to raid the offices of the union again, as he had done three years before, unless the union cleaned out "the communistic literature which it has out there" and stopped "letting cars with foreign licenses park out in front of the office."

With liberals in Memphis so few and so thoroughly intimidated, there has been no loud protest even against such flagrant violations of civil liberties as those committed by the Crump machine during the past few months. However, the National Committee for People's Rights late in November sent in Laurent Frantz, a native Tennessean and a graduate of the Law School of the University of Tennessee, to organize the liberals of the city to demand the observance of constitutional guaranties and the arrest of those guilty of the series of anti-union beatings. As a final demonstration, if any were needed, of the insincerity of the claims of Boss Crump's henchmen that they were doing all they could, Mr. Frantz had hardly started on his work before police arrested him in his hotel room and took him to headquarters, where he was finger-printed, photographed, and questioned by Chief Lee for more than an hour concerning his intentions.

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Book Prices and the Law

BY CHRISTOPHER LAZARE

IN THE last six months two events of major interest have occurred in the publishing world. Both directly affect the buyer of books. One, an act of legislation, may result in the raising of book prices; the other, a commercial venture, may keep them where they are, or possibly lower them in general. The Miller-Tydings bill, signed by the President in August, authorizes what is equivalent to a national price-fixing plan for the resale of manufactured goods 97.5 per cent of which are drugs, cosmetics, or liquors, with books coming in through the back door—but in, none the less. Modern Age Books, Incorporated, is an experiment in the publication of new and reprinted paper-bound books to be sold at 25 and 35 cents, and in cloth for 85 cents.

The Miller-Tydings bill, which seems to be what producers have been waiting for since the strangulation of the NRA codes, legalizes interstate price-fixing agreements between distributor and manufacturer and brings national legality to fair-trade contracts already in effect in forty-two states. These fair-trade contracts, originally created for the purpose of maintaining merchandise-resale prices and thereby eliminating price-cutting, more specifically enabled the producer of trademarked goods to dictate the price at which his commodity was to be resold, within the state, by the retailer. The first statute of this kind was passed in California in 1931, under the tutelage of the druggists' association, after the defeat in the Senate of the Capper-Kelly bills, which sought to circumvent the Sherman Act. The California fair-trade act was, in fact, a successful evasion of two Supreme Court rulings: in 1911, in the case of the Dr. Miles Medical Company *vs.* Park, and in 1921, in the case of the Federal Trade Commission *vs.* the Beechnut Packing Company, the Supreme Court had found price-fixing unconstitutional, a bar to fair competition, and consequently a violation of the Sherman Act.

California slid from under these decisions by simply limiting price-maintenance contracts between manufacturer and retailer to the state boundaries. Within a short time similar laws were passed in Washington, Oregon, New York, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. In 1935 Doubleday, Doran and Company, in an attempt to test the New York law (the Feld-Crawford Act), haled R. H. Macy into court for price-cutting. The case was thrown out by Justice Frederick P. Close of the New York Supreme Court, who declared the act unconstitutional on the ground that the contracts bound non-signers as well as signers and gave "private persons unlimited power over the property of others." This was a severe blow to fixed-price advocates and of course in this state invalidated their best efforts. In December, 1936, however, the Supreme Court reversed Judge Close's opinion, as well as all past precedents, in decisions on four cases, two of which had reference to the California law, two to the Illinois law. The non-signer clause was found valid on the theory that non-signers interfered with the functions of contracts; the producer, the court also decided, had the right to protect his trademark against the "damage" of a price cut.

Twenty-seven states after this interpretation passed fair-trade laws, to be followed in Congress by the Miller-Tydings bill, presented as an amendment to the Sherman Act and providing for the exchange of uniform price contracts between the states.

The publisher, naturally, welcomes the fair-trade price and the protection it affords the small bookshop by eliminating the competition of the price-cutter. His reasons are practical rather than paternalistic. Unlike magazines, which enjoy the advantages of a reduced postal rate and have developed a large subscription and mail circulation, books are distributed almost exclusively through retail outlets. These outlets, the bookshops, derive 20 per cent of their profit from best sellers, or from what department stores have, in the past, largely converted into "loss leaders." The device of the "loss leader" is a simple one. An article, in this case a book, is sold at a minimum profit or even at a loss as a bait to patrons, to create a "bargain myth," and to increase the sale of non-trademarked goods at prices which more than compensate for the loss on the bait. Macy's, for example, sold "Gone with the Wind" ($3) at cut prices which went as low as 89 cents, and handled 18 per cent of the total 1,300,000 copies sold. Naturally, the bookseller with no other merchandise to offset his losses was unable to compete with the department store on those terms. Twelve stores throughout the country were in this way seriously undermining the profits of the local bookshops. Some of the booksellers (there are only about 800 with whom publishers have direct dealings) were driven out of business, unable to survive on the sale of poetry and gardening tracts, and the publishers began to give serious thought to a practice that threatened their outlets and, what was more alarming, themselves.

Their aroused interest in fair prices coincided with the campaign for price maintenance being waged by the National Association of Retail Druggists, and finally a committee headed by Donald Brace, vice-president of Harcourt, Brace and Company, developed a plan whereby minimum prices would be set by contract with the dealers, on "all titles which the publisher elects to protect" (leaving a loophole for the Literary Guild and other price-cutting organizations with which the dealer is still unable to compete). In a short time the publisher and

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the retailer were welded more closely than ever before, books were selling throughout the nation at the prices listed on their jackets, and Macy's was forced to return 36,000 copies of "Gone with the Wind" to the Macmillan Company.

But what of the consumer? What, now, is to prevent the price of books from rising? An important competitive factor has been disposed of, and a new kind of price coordination established between book manufacturer and retailer. In the only other price-fixing arrangement known in the book industry, namely, the NRA Booksellers' Code, a provision was inserted protecting the consumer from price-manipulation by the publisher. The present fair-trade act contains no such clause. The arguments against the possibility of price-raising are, on the whole, unsatisfactory. For example, Frederic Melcher, editor of the *Publishers' Weekly,* wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly:*

> No merchandise offered to the public encounters such extended competition as books. If a prospective buyer wants a book, he can get it from a local, county, or state library; he can borrow it from a friend; or he can buy a used copy; or he can rent a copy from a lending library. Is it probable that a publisher is going to jeopardize his chances to sell his product by putting an uneconomic price on it?

The conditions which Mr. Melcher describes are those which have always existed and which have never in the past "jeopardized" the publisher's "chances to sell his product."

A *new* condition is the uniform price which permits the bookseller to "push" a $3 book in preference to a $2 book without fear of being undersold elsewhere. The margin of retail profit is an important factor in price-raising. The retailer obtains his books from the publisher at discounts varying from 30 to 45 per cent of the list price, in proportion to the size of his order. It is no more than logical for him to "promote" those books which offer him a higher margin; 40 per cent of $3 is better than 40 per cent of $2.

An illuminating case in point is the experience of Pepsodent Toothpaste with the California fair-trade act in 1935. Pepsodent achieved national popularity through price reduction. After the passage of the fair-trade act it decided to void its contracts and return to its former low-price policy. Almost immediately it was neglected by the retailers in favor of other brands with a higher list price and consequently a higher profit margin. Within a few months Pepsodent not only was compelled to raise its prices but found it strategic to contribute $25,000 to advance the cause of additional fair-trade legislation.

Books, of course, are not as interchangeable as brands of toothpaste—nor are they daily necessities. They are bought and read for a variety of reasons, not always the most discriminating and discerning ones. In their extensive sale as gifts, for example, the element of personal selection is rarely as strong as that of shop recommendation. Many a customer bound for a hospital bedside or a birthday party has been gently guided by a clerk in the choice of an appropriate novel or biography. The clerk is being more than just "obliging." Very probably he is pushing a book which offers his employer the best profit in marginal discount.

An example closer home than the drug market is to be found in the failure of the Bonibooks. These books were published to sell for $1, or in the dealer's terms at about half the discount of the usual trade editions. From the beginning they were badly displayed or completely shelved, neglected in a way that was almost equivalent to a retailer boycott. When they subsequently failed, it was more because of a lack of dealer cooperation than of consumer demand.

If one or two publishers hoist their prices, it is not difficult to imagine the retailer having a similar preference for a $3 book over a $2 book. Nor to imagine the publisher of $2 books objecting, in turn, to the neglect of his output while the somewhat higher-priced editions of his competitors benefit by the retailers' sales pressure. Before he allows his cheaper books to go under the counter he will raise his prices, and the consumer will have to meet them, just as now people who buy books have to pay list prices in place of the former reduced prices offered by the department stores.

There is, however, another competitive condition which, while not as drastic as the "loss leader," may keep prices down—the publication of new books retailing for no more than most magazines, and competing almost as magazines with the "trade editions." Modern Age turns out minimum first editions of 50,000. Its profit lies in mass production, a manufacturing cliché which publishers have never been able to carry into practice, chiefly because of a lack of distributing facilities and retail outlets. The Modern Age books, small and paper-bound, are on sale on newsstands and in drug and chain stores in addition to bookstores. They have reached 7,000 outlets so far.

The average publisher loses money on 80 per cent of his books and makes his profit on 20 per cent—best sellers which fortuitously run into mass production. His editions are for the most part small; his production costs high. If Modern Age succeeds, and it is, of course, still in the experimental stage, the sale of any of its list books will be equivalent to the sale of the "moderate" best seller. On this basis the 25-cent book is commercially possible and beyond that should put a check on price-raising. The consumer responds to low prices. Perhaps that is why price-cutting became a menace to publishers who had nothing to gain from the "loss leader" practices of department stores. Books were sold to these stores at the usual discount. The profit was made by the stores themselves on articles in other departments. The habit of buying low-priced reading matter was being cultivated in the public. Modern Age is cultivating this same habit —and with prices being fixed and possibly going up, who can say that it is a bad one? There is one other habit which low-priced books encourage and which publishers themselves must welcome. And that is the habit of reading.

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Behind Vansittart's Promotion

BY ROBERT DELL

Geneva, January 10

THE appointment of Sir Robert Vansittart as England's "Chief Diplomatic Adviser responsible directly to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs" appears on general grounds, leaving aside all personal considerations, to be a reactionary measure which justifies grave apprehension. The official announcement issued from the Foreign Office on December 31 says:

> The functions of the new officer will be analogous to those fulfilled by the occupants of the similar posts attached to other departments (the Chief Industrial and the Chief Economic Advisers to the Government), and will include advising the Secretary of State upon all major questions of policy concerning foreign affairs remitted to him for that purpose, and representing the Foreign Office on any occasions, whether at home or abroad, on which the Secretary of State may wish to avail himself of his services.

Incidentally, it would appear from the official announcement that the decision to create the new post and to appoint Sir Robert Vansittart to it was made by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary without consulting the Cabinet. This procedure may be technically constitutional, but it is surely unusual. A change of such importance should not have been made without the consent of the Cabinet as a whole or without consulting Parliament.

The functions of the Chief Diplomatic Adviser as they are defined in the official announcement make it seem likely that in practice he will be a permanent Foreign Secretary, responsible only to his nominal superior, who will be obliged to cover him and to take the responsibility for his policy. This means that British foreign policy will be more than ever directed by a permanent official and withdrawn from the control of Parliament and public opinion. The only "Chief Diplomatic Adviser" to the government ought to be the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and if the government has so little confidence in him that a permanent official has to be appointed to look after him, it should find a more competent person to take his place.

The reason—or excuse—officially given for the creation of the new post is that conditions have for some time past "placed an increasing strain upon the personnel of the Foreign Office." That might be a reason for increasing the staff of the Foreign Office. It is no reason at all for creating a post hitherto unknown to the British constitution, which will confer on its holder power without responsibility. It is true that Vansittart, as Permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, has had the predominating voice in shaping British policy. For example, he was primarily responsible for British policy in the Ethiopian affair and was the real author of the so-called "Hoare-Laval plan." He loyally recognized his responsibility by his offer to resign when that plan had to be abandoned. But hitherto the functions of the Permanent Under Secretary have been mainly administrative, and his influence on policy has depended on the will of the Foreign Secretary in office at the time. Men like Palmerston or Gladstone or Salisbury or Curzon did not allow any permanent official to shape their policy. This is the first time that a permanent official has been relieved of administrative duties for the express purpose of giving him a voice in the decisions on major foreign questions.

No doubt one of the reasons for the creation of the new post is a desire to secure continuity of foreign policy. There was no such continuity in the nineteenth century, when general elections were sometimes, as in 1880, fought almost exclusively on questions of external policy, and a change in government meant a changed course of action. When, however, Edward Grey became Foreign Secretary in 1905, he set the fashion of continuing the foreign policy of his predecessor, because in fact he was controlled by the permanent officials. The two Labor Cabinets to a great extent followed his example. Now, when a Labor government comes into office, it will find a permanent Chief Diplomatic Adviser whose advice on all major questions of external policy it is expected to ask and to take. It is to be hoped that it would have the courage to abolish the post, although no doubt there would be an outcry in interested quarters. Perhaps it is not a bad thing that this question should be raised now, for, as the deplorable experience of the Popular Front government in France has shown, a government of the left cannot hope to pursue a left foreign policy with a staff of permanent officials and a diplomatic service violently opposed to such a course.

The appointment of Vansittart to the new post shows that the temporary eclipse of his influence mentioned in my article published in *The Nation* of December 18 is at an end. Neville Chamberlain sent Lord Halifax to Berlin against the will of Vansittart, and the complete failure of the visit justified Vansittart's opposition to it. Evidently Vansittart has now once more the upper hand and his position will be stronger than ever. He will replace Halifax as Eden's mentor. Hitherto, whenever Eden has been away, Halifax has replaced him at the Foreign Office. The fact that Neville Chamberlain himself is going to take charge of the Foreign Office during Eden's forthcoming absence is therefore significant. It is clear that the influence of the pro-German group has been weakened, but it must not be assumed that there will be any change in British policy. The policy of an understanding with the fascist powers is likely to be

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pursued more consistently and perhaps more openly than hitherto. There has been a conflict between Eden and Vansittart on the question of the League of Nations, and events are likely to show that Vansittart has come out on top. He agrees with the German and Italian policy of suppressing Article 16 of the Covenant and depriving the League of any coercive powers against an aggressor, and it is probable that he will now pursue that policy openly, but time will show.

The conduct of the pro-German group, in which the Astors, Lord Londonderry, Lord Lothian, and Lord Halifax are particularly active, had become a scandal. It was at a conclave at Lord Astor's country house that it was decided to ask Neville Chamberlain to send Halifax to Berlin, after it had been ascertained that Hitler would like to see him, and it was to this group that Hitler communicated his demands mentioned in my previous article. Naturally Vansittart resented irregular negotiations of this sort behind the back of the Foreign Office, and he appears to have induced Neville Chamberlain to put a stop to the activities of the Astors and their friends. By the way, on December 21 a member of Parliament, Mr. John Parker, said in a speech in the House of Commons, "It is a great pity that we should have what used to be considered the leading organ in this country, the *Times,* becoming an organ on behalf of a foreign government." In the *Times* report of the debate next day Mr. Parker was made to say "on behalf of the British government." This is a pretty bad example of journalistic dishonesty, which suggests a guilty conscience.

The Elders of Komionka

BY GEROLD FRANK

I WONDER if they are still waiting for a reply from me, the Jewish elders of Komionka? We came there one cold spring morning by horse and cart from Skidel, which is a one-minute stop on the Warsaw-Wilno line, and we came to visit grandparents we had never seen.

They told us we were the third American couple to set foot in the village in the last fifty years; we could well believe it. Two lonely, rutted roads in the heart of Poland cross, and where they cross, that is Komionka. The roofs are thatched in Komionka; the ovens are of whitewashed brick. When night comes, oil lamps cast a yellow glow on bare wooden walls and earth-packed floors. In Komionka the Polish peasant buys cigarettes—sometimes as many as three at a time—and curses the Jew who refuses to sell on a holy day. And though you are as likely to see pigs as children at the peasant's door, his son finds joy in defiling the Jewish graveyard (preferring a Jewish grave to a Polish privy), and a Jew has yet to see the inside of the village hall.

There are no doctors in Komionka. The child born gasping dies; the child born crippled limps through life. No man can tell a child's age in Komionka, for girls who appear to be twelve may be eighteen, and boys who look six may be ten. One talks of bread, not vitamins. Now and then the government tax appraiser comes, and since all Jews are rich, the cobbler and the cigarette dealer know his stamp. They feel the very metal in their flesh.

In Komionka the children stared at us with wide, dark eyes. They followed us wherever we appeared. If we halted, turning to look at them, they froze in their tracks, panic-stricken, ready to flee. My grandmother would shake her finger at them, crying, "Go back! Go back! You foolish children you, what do you want?" But when we turned and went on, they came to life again, scrambling after us hastily, whispering and giggling, the crippled bobbing grotesquely in their eagerness, the tiniest ones falling as they ran—a fantastic beggars' crew, gaunt and wizened little people in rags and cast-off clothes patched and patched again.

The older people grew tongue-tied in our presence. Or else their reticence fell away, their eyes filled, and they wept. What of her son, her prosperous son in New York, asked this old, barefooted woman; why had he forgotten? This aged man with his white, patriarchal beard, his eyes blue as a prophet's, his worn prayerbook never out of his hand—he, too, had a daughter in New York. What evil lay in the air of Golden America that made the heart ice and turned the eyes elsewhere?

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The night before we left, the Jewish elders called upon us. We were packing, leaving behind us such pathetic possessions as we never expected to leave: a hot-water bag (how much better than a heated rock!), a box of aspirin tablets (with caution as to their use), odds and ends in every traveler's bag—soap and toothpaste and toothbrushes, iodine and laxative tablets, towels and safety pins, every available scrap of cloth and thread. We left behind, too, socks for the men, a little colored box for the children (they played with stones before we came), a sweater, bed sheets—"We shall cut them up and make shirts of them," exulted an aunt—clothing and money, zloties to buy a cow or pay for a funeral.

While we were packing, my grandmother stole into the room. She plucked timidly at my sleeve. She said apologetically: "A delegation of the men of the village are here. I told them you were busy but they beg you to receive them, if only for a word."

For a moment I did not know what to do. "What can I say to them?" I asked. "If they want money we have none to give. What can I tell them?"

My grandmother shook her head. "But only talk to them," she pleaded. "It will mean so much to them."

We walked into the low-hanging kitchen. The lamp had been placed on the heavy wooden table, and the men—there were perhaps a dozen, standing stiffly, bareheaded, each with his cap in his hand—loomed before us. They were tall, and in that room they seemed to tower. Somewhere I had seen this all before—medieval, strange, memorable.

We shook hands ceremoniously. Then one of the men stepped forward. It is impossible to convey the dignity and color of his words. What he said, in essence, was this:

"We do not seek to impose upon you. We know well that this village of ours has been honored to have visitors from America, and that to your people has come such honor, such grace, as comes to a man but once in a lifetime—to see a son's son from America a guest in his home and under his roof. Because of this visit we shall shine in your brightness until we go to our graves.

"But we learn that you leave us tomorrow, and we ask: Do not the people in America know our lot? Do they not know how we suffer? How hard life comes, and in what groaning and lamentation we draw our breath?"

"We know, we know," I said, helplessly. "But—" I stopped.

The spokesman twisted his cap in his hands and looked at the floor, and began again.

"The whole world reads of the misery of our people in Germany, but they forget us here in Poland." His voice was low and labored. "The hate against us is not organized so publicly, but it is here none the less. They choke us and crush us, little by little. We live a slow death. We hold our crusts of bread as if they were gold."

Another raised his voice.

"And our children," he said, hesitantly at first, then more firmly. "Who under heaven's eye will have pity on them? To whom can they turn? Where can they go? Palestine is closed save to the rich. And here they cannot live. The youth has no means to marry; the maiden has no dowry to offer. Without money, without hope, they live in this land like thieves in a prison. Aye, it is they who inherit a lot even sadder than ours."

The lamp wick sputtered, and shadows trembled.

"I cannot do much," I said at length. "I am only a tourist, an unimportant man. But I have eyes, and I will tell what I have seen here. Perhaps someone I tell these things to can help."

A murmur of voices and exclamations. "Ah, if he could do anything . . . if America could know . . ."

The spokesman voiced their thoughts.

"Yes, yes," he said. "Only tell our people in America. Tell them of our lot. Tell them whatever can be done we shall be grateful. Let all America know. If the world only knew—"

"I promise," I said. "I will do what I can."

"Then we may go," said the spokesman humbly. "We are content. And when you leave us, our deepest prayers and blessings go with you."

Again, ceremoniously, we shook hands all around. They filed carefully out of the room.

The next morning we left.

Drawings by John Groth

Shall I write to them? Shall I say, I have told their story, and it is known? We all know. Three years have passed since my visit. Do the Jewish elders wait, in the cold, barren, hungry village of Komionka, in all the cold and barren and hungry villages of Poland, do they wait still?

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

COULD anything be more idiotic than the present armament race? If it were not carried on by alleged statesmen, it would be properly characterized as worthy only of morons. It is all of a piece with the horrible incompetence and stupidity which plunged the world, especially the United States, into the Great War. It may be, of course, that there is something radically wrong with me, but when I study the dispatches and letters of Colonel House and Walter Page and the twistings and contradictions and failures of Woodrow Wilson, I am staggered and then horrified that such vital decisions, resulting in the death of 50,000 Americans and the wounding of 250,000 others, should have been in the hands of men so utterly incompetent.

The same feeling of nausea comes over me when I read the details of this naval-armament race now going on. No sooner does England announce that it is building battleships than we follow suit and lay down two. Then Japan makes trouble in the Far East, and we propose to build three more battleships despite the fact that Admiral Sims, commander-in-chief of our fleet during the World War and one of the ablest officers this country has ever produced, publicly stated that in the next war our battleships would all be safely moored way up the Mississippi River. Then along comes Italy and announces that it is going to lay down two battleships which will be more effective ships than any now possessed by any other country, whereupon within three days it is announced from Paris that leading spirits in the government have decided that France will build three more battleships to offset Mussolini's new craft, and that it will continue to lay down ship for ship with the Italians. Just what the Germans are doing nobody knows. They are pretending to be bound by their naval treaty with England by which they have pledged themselves not to have a fleet larger than 35 per cent of the British fleet, but if there are those so innocent as to trust anything that Hitler says, I am not one of them. I wouldn't believe him after what he wrote in "Mein Kampf," and after his subsequent career, if he should stand at the throne of God and raise his right hand and swear to a statement—any statement.

Then there is the Soviet Union. For some unknown reason—perhaps because they have not the necessary facilities in view of our own orders—the American shipyards announce that they will not build any battleships for Russia. Therefore, according to the New York *Times*, the Russians are contracting for huge machinery in England which will enable them to make the necessary armor plate. When this machinery is set up, Russia too will enter the battleship race. When it does I will bet my best suit of clothes that Germany will tell England how sorry it is that it cannot keep its word but it will have to build more ships to meet the Communist menace. The more ships Germany builds, the more Russia will build. As for Japan, there again we do not know what is happening, but according to a dispatch in the *Giornale d'Italia*, three super-battleships, in addition to sixty-three other men-of-war, are being built now or are projected in Tokyo. Meanwhile England is straining every nerve to complete a 1938 naval program which Hector C. Bywater, the well-informed naval correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, believes will include three, four, or five new battleships. Britain plans to send a squadron of at least five battle-cruisers to Hongkong to overawe Japan—a procedure which seems to me just about as futile as to put five British submarines in the Baltic as a threat to Russia.

Speaking of submarines, the race there is also in full swing. It is announced that Italy has more submarines than any other country, but this is disputed by friends of Russia, who say that the Soviet Union has secretly built a far larger number than anybody knows and has enough of them in Vladivostok to make the Japanese extremely uneasy. Then, of course, there is the aircraft-carrier race, and the aircraft race too. The head of our headquarters air fleet, General Frank M. Andrews, sagely wags his head and says that we are falling alarmingly behind European countries in the number of our air pilots—as if that had any bearing whatever on our own defense problem. From London comes the startling announcement that England will soon have no fewer than 12,250 airplanes, more than France, Germany, and Italy together. At least it thinks it will have, but if Artemus Ward were by my side I am certain he would bet all his wife's relations on the Germans producing, when the 12,250 are ready, 1,000 more airplanes than the British General Staff thought Berlin had. Really this is the grandest child's game invented since ticktacktoo, and it has the advantage of being played with human lives and the resources of all the nations.

So once more we have the vicious circle before us. More ships, more armaments, greater expenditures, and then again more ships, more armaments, greater expenditures, with financial bankruptcy and the lowering of the standard of life of all workers right ahead of us. Stanley Baldwin said that another armament race would bankrupt a number of nations and make war absolutely certain. Then he put England into the armament race, and out of gratitude they made him a lord and retired him with all possible honors. Do I hear anybody assert that this is a sane world? If there is any such person he is a liar.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

The Prodigal Lewis

THE PRODIGAL PARENTS. By Sinclair Lewis. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

I WILL put it very briefly. During the 1920's Sinclair Lewis was surely our most significant writer of fiction; today he is the author of "The Prodigal Parents." Whether he wrote this unfortunate book because he was naive or because he was canny, I am not prepared to decide; but it should as much restore him to favor with a class of people he once disconcerted as "Reflections on the French Revolution" restored Burke. This class of people are commonly called Babbitts. Fifteen years ago Mr. Lewis also turned his attention to them, and the general impression then was that he wanted to slaughter them skin and hide. Today it would seem as if he wanted to kiss and make up.

"The Prodigal Parents" is concerned with the revolt of a middle-aged couple named Hazel and Fredk Wm Cornplow against their uppish daughter Sara and their parasitical son Howard. Fredk Wm is a prosperous dealer in motor cars, a Republican, a creature of habit, a good provider, an easily touched and easily ruffled human being. To Sara he certainly is all these things, and that is his crime: Sara spends her life participating in all the most advanced movements, lives off her father while despising his way of existence, and clashes with him when she is not busy ignoring him. To Howard he is a source of supply, whether it be for education, pocket money, an automobile, or a job. After a while these things begin to stick in Fredk Wm's crop, in particular when his unbearably intelligent daughter and his unbearably stupid son become radicals. Mr. Lewis is very deft in showing us how badly Sara and Howard understand radicalism, and how well Fredk Wm understands Sara and Howard. On the whole he comes off far better than they do, especially since they remain Communists for a most indecently short time.

But after that, there is Howard's loafing on the job and Sara's interior decorating and Sara's efforts to thwart and enslave her father; and Fredk Wm gets pretty much fed up. All these years, though he may not have had a soul, he has fancied going off to see the world, and here are his children keeping him in harness so that they can be eternally provided for. But Fredk Wm fools them. One night he and Hazel steal off, and next are heard from amid the historic ruins of Europe.

Well, it is easy enough to sympathize with Fredk Wm Cornplow, one of whose children is a prig and the other a bum, and to clap hands admiringly at his successful revolt. I, personally, would approve of throwing Howard into an incinerator and Sara down a well. But it is worth pointing out that in creating Sara and Howard Mr. Lewis has had recourse to what is technically known as a set-up. Dreadful as the pair of them are, they are even more unconvincing. Their reality has been thrown to the dogs so that their father may have his innings.

But it is to be feared that these dummies of Mr. Lewis's are stalking-horses as well. It is to be feared that this book implies more than the shocking advantage which children can take of their parents; that it is, in fact, a paean to all middle-class, middle-aged virtues—to common sense, to plain bread and butter, to Yankee Doodle, to vox populi, to "You can fool some of the people" etc., etc. Mr. Lewis shows us the dried-up, contemptible snob who snoots good Fredk Wm; he shows us the new-fangled psychiatrist with his palaver and his high fees; he shows us, finally, the Communist organizer who steals money from the pockets of boys knocked unconscious in a motor accident. By contrast the sane, industrious, kind-hearted Fredk Wm becomes immensely touching—the only thing left in America whom we can point to as an example, now that everything else in America, including its novelists, has turned sour. Very mean of Sara to sneer at Fredk Wm. Although fifteen years ago, when his name was George F. Babbitt, Mr. Lewis sneered at him too. But each man kills the thing he loves.

"The Prodigal Parents" is, it seems to me, a fatally illiberal book. Not because satire at the expense of young people a great deal better than Sara and Howard, and young people's radicalism a great deal less shallow than theirs, isn't legitimate and mightn't prove salutary, but because it is always important to know the underlying attitude from which the satire springs; to realize whether a satirist aims at correcting abuses or at stifling progress. Mr. Lewis's novel is not just reactionary in its political implications; it is equally anti-intellectual in its whole view of life. If there is something good and useful and resistant in Fredk Wm Cornplow, let us at least measure it against what is good and useful and resistant in other ways of life. To measure him against two such imbeciles as his son and daughter, two such caricatures as the organizer and the psychiatrist, is to load the dice. But much more is involved than fairness of portrayal. The question of values is involved, of Mr. Lewis's standards of civilization—of what to his mind constitutes enlightenment, culture, a progressive society. On pages 99-100 he extols, in his own person, the achievements of the middle classes, and proudly exhibits how many great men have come out of their ranks. But, to go no farther, has he forgotten how many of these men became the sharpest critics of bourgeois life, how many suffered from its smugness, narrowness, and materialism, how many in desperation broke away? It is all very well to show that Fredk Wm Cornplow is no monster, but it is hardly necessary to imply that he is a hero. At any rate, Mr. Lewis has convinced us of nothing here except his own philistinism. And philistinism, in a writer, is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Semantics for the Million

THE TYRANNY OF WORDS. By Stuart Chase. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

IN "The Tyranny of Words" Stuart Chase turns aside for the nonce from questions of economics and sociology and occupies himself with some of the problems of communication. How do meanings get attached to words? How do words get attached to meanings? What is the meaning of "meaning"? By what mechanism and with what degree of

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accuracy is thought conveyed from mind to mind? Does thought mold language or does language mold thought? Does the structure of our language influence our ideas of things? Why is failure of communication so frequent? And can anything be done to improve communication? These and similar questions have been running through Chase's mind for some time, as they ought to run through the mind of any writer who respects his craft and desires to say his say honestly and effectively. Having a gift for turning experience into copy, he has made a book out of his quest for the answers.

The book falls into two parts of approximately equal length—the first an outline of what Chase, a little grandiosely, calls "the semantic discipline," the second an application of the discipline to various cases. Neither part, however, is all that it purports to be.

Except for minor embellishments drawn from the writings of P. W. Bridgman, Lancelot Hogben, Thurman W. Arnold, Jerome Frank, and various others, Chase has gone for his theory directly to Alfred Korzybski's "Science and Sanity" and to Ogden and Richards's "Meaning of Meaning." It is unfortunate that he did not go to them indirectly by way of a few standard works on semantics and the theory of language, for these books are unwholesome reading for anyone unprepared to deal with them critically. From Korzybski Chase has derived, *inter alia*, an extravagant notion of the utility of semantics as an instrument for extirpating pernicious thinking and emotional reactions, a serious misunderstanding of "the *is* of identity," a slogan demanding "a language whose structure corresponds to physical structure," and the practice of littering his exposition with irrelevancies, physical, mathematical, psychological, and what-not, until the effect is that of a literary scavenger party. From Ogden and Richards he has borrowed more useful apparatus, such as their discussion of levels of abstraction and their diagram explaining the relations of symbol (word), reference (meaning), and referent (thing meant). With profit he might have borrowed more. He could have found no better weapon to his hand, for instance, than their fivefold analysis of meaning into the item presented for attention, the speaker's feeling toward the item, his tone toward the hearer, and his intention. Yet he seems to have missed it altogether.

The outline of "the semantic discipline" that he presents is decidedly fragmentary and is simplified and puréed to a fineness that Helen Hokinson's clubwomen could ingest without discomfort. It is finally summarized in fifteen propositions such as: that words are not things; that words mean nothing in themselves; that meaning in words arises from context of situation; that abstract words and terms are especially liable to spurious identification, and so on. "We are in sight of a technique," says Mr. Chase, after listing these fifteen propositions, "which will let us take a political speech, a dictator's ukase, a masterpiece of philosophy, a plan to save the world, a column by Mark Sullivan, analyze it, and tell specifically what is wrong with it, down to counting the blabs." One suspects that some people have been semanticists unawares all their adult lives. But in the presence of such ebullient enthusiasm for the dry axioms of an academic discipline there is really nothing to be said.

The second half of "The Tyranny of Words" is different stuff. In it Chase turns, with something like relief, to the practical examination of verbalism and the mischief that verbalism works in contemporary notions of economics, law, politics, international affairs, and other subjects. Except for the occasional appearance of such a term as "operational test" (taken from Bridgman) or "referent" there is hardly a trace of the semantics discussed in the earlier chapters. The method of attack is quite untechnical and is, in fact, nothing very different from the witty, realistic, commonsense, debunking technique which, from Benjamin Franklin to Mr. Dooley to Thurman Arnold, has been the favorite American method for removing stuffing from shirts, ideas, or institutions. The chapters on philosophy and logic, it must be said, are not so good as the others. In them Chase is on unfamiliar ground. His attack on "philosophic method" is obviously a sham battle; where is his referent? As examples of logic he exhibits syllogisms that every elementary textbook is engaged in destroying. What is the use of "the semantic discipline" if it doesn't deter a man from such follies? But the rest of it is very good Stuart Chase, in fact, Stuart Chase at almost his best, shrewd, witty, humane, openminded. You have probably seen some of it in *Harpers Magazine*, and you will not want to miss the rest.

It is twenty years since the English periodical *Mind* opened its pages to a symposium on "The Meaning of Meaning," almost fifteen years since C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards published their book of the same title. Few Americans seem to have been aware that in the intervening years an important study, almost an educational movement in itself, has been developing. Mr. Chase's treatment suffers, as I have indicated, from various shortcomings. But it is something to have sensed the wider aspects of semantics, as Ogden and Richards conceive the subject, and to have made the first attempt to write a popular book about it.

GEORGE GENZMER

Wealth Against Society

AMERICA'S 60 FAMILIES. By Ferdinand Lundberg. Vanguard Press. $3.75.

WITH all its faults—and there are many, although, it should be said at once, none is fatal—Mr. Lundberg's "America's 60 Families" is a very important book. It belongs in that group of "exposure" works that have been so typically American—inadequately grounded philosophically, yet instinctively right morally because they have sprung from a passionate human and humane conviction—and that have had such a profound influence on human action. We have not produced many pure thinkers of the very first flight; we haven't had our Miltons or Lockes or Marxes. But we have had our goodly share of the prophets—our Hinton R. Helpers, Henry Demarest Lloyds, and Gustavus Myerses. And it is in this latter company that Ferdinand Lundberg belongs.

What are the preoccupations of Mr. Lundberg in this big, sprawling, humorless work of his that looks and reads so much like an encyclopedic compilation? I have found three, largely: first, that present-day capitalism has ended in concentrating economic power in the hands of a top group of individuals; second, that our political leaders have been the conscious and wilful pawns of the owners of great wealth; and, third, that wealth has corrupted taste, neglected culture, and bastardized intelligence. I think that the author has oversimplified and hence distorted the validity of his first two points; his third, however, he drives home again and again unerringly.

It is from his first point that the current sensational interest in Mr. Lundberg's book derives. Through an analysis of the 1924 income figures—the only ones ever made public—Mr. Lundberg has come to the conclusion that private wealth is largely collected in the hands of some sixty family groups

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COMMENTS on THE TYRANNY OF WORDS have come from leaders in almost every profession—Law and Politics, Business and Economics, History and the Social Sciences, the Arts, Journalism, Creative Writing, Mathematics, Education, Philosophy.

JAMES ROWLAND ANGELL
Educational Counselor, National Broadcasting Company
(1) THURMAN ARNOLD
Yale School of Law, author of "The Folklore of Capitalism"
HARRY ELMER BARNES
ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES
(2) CARLETON BEALS
CHARLES A. BEARD
CARL BECKER
Cornell University
THOMAS BEER
E. T. BELL
California Institute of Technology
A. A. BERLE, JR.
ALFRED M. BINGHAM
Editor of Common Sense
ISAIAH BOWMAN
President, Johns Hopkins University
P. W. BRIDGMAN
Harvard University
C. M. CHILD
Stanford University
CHARLES E. CLARK
Yale School of Law
GEORGE S. COUNTS
Columbia University
PAUL DE KRUIF
(3) JOHN DOS PASSOS
WALTER PRICHARD EATON
MORRIS ERNST
P. H. EPPS
Furman University
(4) JOHN T. FLYNN
FELIX J. FRAZER
W. HORSLEY GANTT
Johns Hopkins University
C. JUDSON HERRICK
University of Chicago
HAMILTON HOLT
President, Rollins College
(5) BASSETT JONES
HOWARD MUMFORD JONES
Harvard University
MARIETTA JOHNSON
School of Organic Education
(6) C. J. KEYSER
Columbia University
SINCLAIR LEWIS
ARCHIBALD MAC LEISH
KEMP MALONE
Johns Hopkins University
HUGHES MEARNS
New York University
WILLIAM F. OGBURN
University of Chicago
RAYMOND PEARL
Johns Hopkins University
(7) JULIA PETERKIN
PAUL ROSENFELD
FERDINAND SCHEVILL
ALBERT STERNER
SIMEON STRUNSKY
(8) RAYMOND GRAM SWING
JOHN R. TUNIS
HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON
JOHN B. WATSON

STUART CHASE'S
The Tyranny of Words

Stuart Chase is serving notice on all who *blab-blab*. He is telling the public, sick to death of talking and being talked at over radios, in newspapers, from lecture platforms and campaign stumps, that they'd better ask, "What do you *really* mean by that?" He has discovered a new discipline which promises a revolution in the process of thinking and is attempting to give a muddled world a virtual *consumer's research report on words*. For the misuse of words is the most insidious evil of this age. Here is a book of far-reaching, yet everyday, importance. To one who reads it the world can never look quite as it did before.

Typical Comments

(1) My guess is that THE TYRANNY OF WORDS will be one of the most exciting and influential books of this decade.

(2) Everything he writes is hot off the bat of reality, but no book he has ever done is more exciting than this one. I have already gone through it twice and shall read it again.

(3) I read it through at one gulp. It's exhilarating reading.

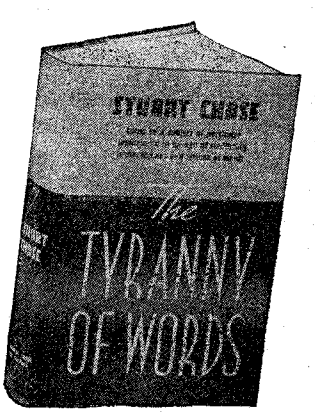
(4) The best thing Stuart Chase has ever done. Having read it through, I promptly proceeded to read it again and I expect to read it at least once more.

(5) If his book does no more than stop a few people from talking, particularly politicians, he will have done a humanitarian work.

(6) It is bright, quick, nimble, lively . . . The thesis so brightly handled is an exceedingly important one.

(7) It pleases me no end . . . I wish from my heart that you could somehow induce every politician, teacher, preacher, and all who listen to them to read it.

(8) On reading the last page I wired Stuart Chase that I never again would be the same person. I still feel changed. I also feel that this is one of the most needed books of this chaotic time.



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in America. Deriving their power from the ownership of the essential means of production and distribution, these families today constitute a closed ruling oligarchy. It is next to impossible for outsiders to be admitted into this charmed circle—for their scions intermarry—and it is impossible for single individuals, no matter how profligate, to destroy their towering accumulations.

Of course, there is much that is sound in this kind of analysis. More important, the symbolism of the "sixty families" is socially useful. Already, as we know, the symbol has become a social weapon (the New Dealers have already made it their own); and other weapons are being forged—advertising censorship, threatened libel suits—to weaken its strength. But the whole argument cannot be defended. Fortunes do disappear in modern times, especially when they are not linked with a special kind of monopolist privilege or when they are not to be found in the very first circle of finance capital. Mr. Lundberg, because his analysis is not very sensitive, has not sought to differentiate among various categories of modern private fortunes. Why do not our railroading and mercantile fortunes last as long as our industrial and banking fortunes? Why do our banking fortunes—even if, dollar for dollar at any given moment, they do not mount as high as any of the others—outlast them all? Where really is economic power to be found? The Goulds (railroading) and the Friedsams (merchandising), despite the fact that they are still very wealthy, have virtually disappeared from the reigning oligarchy; the Guggenheims (mining) are on their way out. The Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Mellons will remain; for in their possession rests power more than accumulated wealth. They have institutionalized power in finance capital just as the merchant capitalist class of the eighteenth century sought to institutionalize power in land and urban property.

In other words, Mr. Lundberg makes the mistake of viewing our plutocracy statically—as though they represented a kind of frozen privilege. The assumption would be: if only we would try to break their incrustated form off the body economic and politic (we could, for example, in terms of such an analysis, tax them out of existence), then once more the rest of us could live and breathe. We know and Mr. Lundberg knows that this is not so. Our "sixty families" cannot be cut away, for they do not constitute a lifeless mass. The fact is, by a kind of chemical action, they have succeeded in getting into and poisoning the whole circulating system of our economy and polity. We are confronted not by a physical malformation but by an active blood disease for which there is no specific.

The second of Mr. Lundberg's theses, that our recent political history is simply the obverse side of the nasty story of the processes of private accumulation, goes too far, as well. One would be on safe ground if one argued—leaving out the lesser fry and the obviously corrupt—that Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt were the captives of their own class educations and backgrounds; that since they were members of the middle class and inheritors of the middle-class tradition, their loyalties could not be other than they have been. But Mr. Lundberg is not content with saying simply this. He feels it imperative to show that virtually every political decision of consequence with which these political leaders were associated was dictated by a conscious awareness of the presence of economic masters behind the scenes. One does not have to go to great lengths to disprove such a claim. What if certain malignant financial powers did benefit from the construction of an isthmian canal at Panama? The fact is, with or without the special stake of the Panama Canal Company of America, such a canal was bound to be built. Again, Cleveland H. Dodge (copper) did have great personal influence with Woodrow Wilson. But, I venture to say, even greater mentors were Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Burke, and John Bright. To present the argument in its crudely determinist form as Mr. Lundberg does, is to weaken the effectiveness of a sound materialist interpretation of politics.

It is the third strain in Mr. Lundberg's work that makes his book so truly important. Piling up an extraordinary mass of factual detail—he has examined every aspect of the personal living of people of great wealth—Mr. Lundberg has proved that the effects of private accumulation have been anti-social. It is around this point that the greatest popular indignation is likely to collect. If our wealthy are not really using their fortunes as public trusts as their apologists contend they are, if instead of furthering the dissemination of intelligence they really prostitute it, if instead of cultivating the arts they really sterilize them, if instead of acting as the leaders of taste they really vulgarize it, then our ruling class is reigning without conviction or loyal supporters. After all, the outstanding hallmark of a class in power, when it was still performing a vital historical mission—witness the Periclean, Renaissance, Victorian, Third Republic ages—was such a leadership or, at worst, patronage.

Mr. Lundberg proves devastatingly—in long recitals of how our wealthy have acquired educational institutions, philanthropies, venal journalists, yachts, golden bathroom fixtures—that the processes of private accumulation have no social meaning. It is in these chapters of his book that the author does his extraordinarily effective, indeed profoundly disturbing work. If private wealth no longer has a creative function to perform in either the economic or the cultural sphere and if the voices of its sycophants have no echoes, then historically the middle class is finished. At this point we can say that the twilight of an epoch has set in. How long or short it will be will depend upon the rapidity with which a large enough group of Americans can assimilate the lesson at the heart of Mr. Lundberg's book. LOUIS M. HACKER

Hell

GOYA'S "THE DISASTERS OF THE WAR." Eighty-five Plates. With an Introduction by Elie Faure. Oxford University Press. $1.50.

COUCHED in sharp aristocratic prints, a macabre epic becomes generally accessible in this volume of facsimile reproductions. The book itself is perhaps the least triumphant as well as the least expensive of the remarkable Phaidon series. Certain of the reproductions represent inferior pulls, apparently taken after the aquatint had seriously impaired the singing quality of the original etchings. Others of them lose the almost matchlessly kinetic lines of their originals, and with it the fineness of the wonderful and terrible expressions. But a masterpiece is a thing no interpretation quite can compromise, not even interpretations far grosser than the Phaidon's all-in-all passable one of "The Disasters of the War." And the eighty-five plates handed to his friend Cean Bermudez by the old exile in Bordeaux in 1824 constitute such a thing. The sovereign beauty of six or seven of them and the terrific nature of the experience fully articulated, with the magic of passion, by the lot render the set not only one of the most imposing but one of the most masterly products of the etcher's art.

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A record of Spanish resistance to Napoleon, because of its impartial attribution of the war-time horrors savagely depicted by it—butchery, rapine, miseries of all sorts—to both defendants and aggressors, and because of the very general character of the uniforms upon the figures of its soldiers, the grisly series remains one of the most terrible of all revelations of the horrors of organized warfare; and something besides a revelation of these horrors. The experience it projects by means of architectural organizations of harsh light and shade, prodigious varieties of dynamic motion, and cosmic effects of space, above all by the strange, almost sensual delicacy of its representations of suffering, dying, and dead human flesh, may have been crystallized in Goya by events of the invasion of 1808, the famine in Madrid in 1811, and the post-war reaction under Ferdinand VII. But the drawings' ultimate reference is to something timeless, beyond mere war and merely wakened and monumentally actualized by war. It is the hell in man. The sharp blacks and whites are saturated with the ferocity and sadism, the physical and mental suffering and pain almost boundlessly potential in the human creature and periodically his master. In moods of rage, of interrogation of causes, of compassion, and of utter despair, nightmarish design upon design makes us feel within ourselves and without these perennial almost uncontrollable impulses of brutality and savagery, bestial delight in cruelty and hateful satisfaction in destruction, and their terrible, pitiable aftermaths. "The Disasters of the War" indeed! Rather say "The Disasters of Living"!

Still a progress does obtain in this experience—possibly as the consequence of Goya's self-riddance of much perilous stuff. The third of the three books of plates, the one beginning after the projection of the feeling of the nihility of all things, and supposedly full of references to the reaction, is not only more fantastically, less naturalistically visionary than the preceding two, the books of the shambles and the famine. It also is more luminous, more hopeful and prophetic in all senses of the word. It delves profoundly into causes, symbolizing the friends of man's bestiality in the forms of brutes and eagles, churchmen and rituals; and, in the beautiful shape of a young woman, the light and the love that are its enemy and the friend of his ideal. In a sort of radiant future we find her significantly standing beside a Man who holds an implement of labor in his hand. But in the end the epic returns us to the actuality. It closes with three tragic prints of fettered captives.

PAUL ROSENFELD

That Happy Italian People!

THE PLOUGH AND THE SWORD: LABOR, LAND, AND PROPERTY IN FASCIST ITALY. By Carl T. Schmidt. Columbia University Press. $2.50.

MR. SCHMIDT describes the concrete bearing of fascism on the life of the Italian agricultural classes. He has read carefully the more than two hundred publications listed in the selected bibliography at the back of his book, and has not confined himself to copying their title pages as authors of long bibliographies so often do. He has lived in Italy for about a year, keeping his eyes open to discover the realities of life behind the official reports and the speeches and writings of Mussolini and his Italian and foreign propaganda agents. Moreover, he has realized that he could not appreciate the behavior of the fascist dictatorship today without taking stock of the physical conditions of the country and

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of historical precedents. His first two chapters, Rural Italy and A Struggle Against Poverty, are models of learning and understanding. Under his searching inquiry all that card-castle of false information which fascist propaganda has built up about the achievements of the Mussolinian dictatorship crashes to the ground.

To be sure, the "wheat battle" has led to an increase in domestic production and to a marked approach toward self-sufficiency since 1930. But to a large extent self-sufficiency is due to a substantial decline in the consumption of wheat products. Moreover, self-sufficiency in wheat does not mean self-sufficiency in all foodstuffs. The increase in domestic production has been purchased at the cost of seriously unbalancing Italian agriculture. Commodities other than wheat have been neglected. A general reduction of live stock, astonishingly severe in some regions, has been one of the worst consequences of the "wheat battle." Italy's dependence on foreign sources for animal products has increased.

Land reclamation started in Italy at least three thousand years ago. During the period 1862-1911, 550,000 hectares were drained. By the end of 1922, when Mussolini came to power, 47,000 more hectares had been drained, and reclamation works were then progressing on 623,000 hectares. For four or five years after the advent of the dictatorship the government showed little concern for reclamation, and outlays for that purpose declined. Work was largely limited to the maintenance and continuation of projects already begun. It was only in October, 1926, that Mussolini discovered land reclamation and made a solemn announcement: "It is our task to change beyond all recognition the physical and spiritual face of our country within the space of ten years." In the year 1927-28 expenditures began to rise appreciably. More than four billion lire were expended from 1929-30 to 1933-34. But since 1934 there have been a marked reduction in new works undertaken, a tendency to abandon all projects not urgently needed, and a concentration on those promising immediate political returns.

One of these projects is the reclamation of the Pontine Marshes. This region, within sixty kilometers of Rome, offered the fascist regime an opportunity to carry out a project of great demonstrative value. Its conversion, regardless of cost, into small farms has become, with appropriate publicity, an important source of prestige for the regime. Nearly a third of all funds spent for reclamation since July 1, 1932, has been directed to the Pontine Marshes. Other projects, many of which would have had greater social and economic significance, have suffered in consequence. Maintenance of the work accomplished will call for further heavy outlays in the future. Some of the land has turned out to be poor. But the venture has been satisfactory in terms of publicity.

The last three chapters of the book are devoted to describing conditions among the Italian peasantry. Mr. Schmidt shows that the masses remain, as before, separated from control of the land but with even less hope of rising in the economic scale. The fascist era has seen a decline of small peasant proprietorship. The number of "operating owners" fell nearly half a million between 1921 and 1931. We have no statistics for the period after 1931, but there is reason to believe that there has been a continuous decline in the number of small cultivating proprietors.

To read this book would perhaps be illuminating to a certain professor at Yale University who, having been able to shake hands with Mussolini "during an unexpected audience," paid for that high honor by sending to the New York *Herald Tribune* of December 18, 1937, a letter in which he attributed to Mussolini, among many other miracles, that of having "astonishingly improved Italy in a material way."

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ceremony. But the high water of his disillusion comes as he realizes that Marina is really in love with another, the lusty Aris, and as he witnesses, with ever-mounting horror, the fierce conflict of the three adults and its tragic outcome.

Although all this has moments of considerable tension, the accent of the book is not on the plot, its somewhat familiar triangular struggle, or even on the turbid reactions of the aroused adolescent; it is rather on those customs that best embody—as do the nuptial rites—the Persian conception of the fine art of living. Indeed, from time to time the novel overflows altogether and becomes a lavishly colorful, biblically lyrical celebration of the more pleasant aspects of the Persian way of life. Much of this is interesting, but a supercargo of custom and ritual, no matter how rich, does not make a novel. Occupied by colorful incidentals and pleasant but cloudy touches of symbolism, Mr. Varandyan forgets, one fears, the necessity of giving flesh and blood to the characters he calls up out of his memories of a Persian village.

MILTON RUGOFF

DRAMA

Musical Cartoon

CHARLES LAMB once denounced the cantata as a corruption of the cheerful uses of the playhouse. What he would think of Marc Blitzstein's "The Cradle Will Rock" (now settled down for a regular run at the Windsor Theater) I hesitate to say, for if that unusual work is something like a cantata it is not a bit like Handel. It is only intermittently "cheerful," but it is by no means solemn; and if the author is aware that Robert Burns once wrote "The Jolly Beggars" in a similar form, even Burns cannot have helped him much. Mr. Blitzstein's unjolly proletarians are not beggars but demanders, and are much more interested in the steel strike than in warbling the delights of rolling in the hay.

All who follow the news of the theater know already the history of the piece, which was originally intended as a Federal Theater production and then, when that production was canceled for reasons generally assumed to be connected with the violence of its partisanship, given without costumes before a special audience. The present series of regular performances follows the method of the original impromptu rehearsal. The only accompaniment is furnished by the composer at a piano, and the uncostumed members of the company simply rise from chairs at the back of the stage to act or sing their sketchy roles. All this may sound a bit bare and forbidding, but given the nature of the piece, it is quite possibly the best way to perform it. One thing is certain—the interest is held and the evening passes quickly.

So many superlatives have been used by so many critics of such different complexions that the prospective spectator perhaps ought to be warned that he will almost inevitably expect too much. "The Cradle Will Rock" is a sort of musical cartoon, with no more shading than a cartoon is expected to have. The writing and the singing are as casual as the staging; so that the success of the whole depends upon two things—a certain dash in the performance and also a certain hearty partisanship in the spectator, by virtue of which he will be ready, when necessary, to assume that whenever malefactors of great wealth are being denounced violently they

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are necessarily being denounced effectively as well. Mr. Blitzstein's vehemence is continuous but his wit is intermittent.

Having entered this caveat I can go on with a good conscience to conclude that "The Cradle Will Rock" nevertheless remains something which should certainly be seen. The very ferocity of the satire is remarkable, some of the lyrics are raffishly amusing, and there is a savagely cumulative absurdity hard to describe even in such minor matters as the successive introduction of the mill-owner and his family—Mr. Mister, Mrs. Mister, Junior Mister, and Sister Mister.

Certainly none of the other productions since my last report demands much attention. "Tortilla Flat" (Henry Miller Theater) is dramatized from Steinbeck's novel of the same name by Jack Kirkland, who was responsible for the stage version of "Tobacco Road." Like the latter it is again a study in total depravity, this time as cultivated by mongrel Mexicans living in California. It is supposed to be funny, but perhaps for the very reason that the grimness of "Tobacco Road" is absent it is not particularly effective. "The Greatest Show on Earth" (Playhouse) exhibits some ingenuity in costuming actors to suggest the circus animals they are supposed to represent, but I have no idea what the intention of the play is.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

Fairy Tale in Five Acts

THE question which everybody must have asked in advance about Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" was whether it would justify its length. Not only was the film to be many times longer than anything Mr. Disney had done; it was to tell a story which he could be imagined as telling in the accustomed time. A fairy tale like an anecdote is by definition brief, and its form helps its content to be credible. We can believe three things that are done in three paragraphs when one of them alone, drawn out to epic length, would be preposterous. The question then was whether Mr. Disney had lost any of his secrets by abandoning his form.

The fact that everybody likes "Snow White" is not necessarily an answer, though it has its importance. Thousands are trampling one another to get into the Music Hall; but the question still is whether the good thing they are there to see could possibly be better. I am not sure that it could, and yet in view of the future which the film opens up I am sure that the matter should be argued. Mr. Disney has both expanded his story and contracted it. He has added animals; he has differentiated and named the dwarfs; and he has elaborated the wicked stepmother in her role as magician, giving her a laboratory with monster retorts and a long-legged raven to scowl in the corner. On the other hand he has suppressed two of her attempts on Snow White's life—the tight lacing and the poisoned comb—and he has stopped short of Snow White's wedding. The wedding is perhaps not missed, but my guess is that the queen should have had more things to do and less time in which to do them. She was the only one of Mr. Disney's creatures who even approached being tiresome.

Mr. Disney's other developments are all to the good, and indescribably delightful. The animals, for instance—I can remember no finer moment in any film than this one when

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at sunrise in the forest the banks of eyes which have looked so sinister all night turn out to belong to rabbits, fawns, chipmunks, bluebirds, and turtles. The transition is from shadowy evil to the clearest and most blithesome benevolence. The antics of these charming beasts vary henceforth between the beatific and the absurd; the pride of the baby bluebird in his voice, the ticklish turtle offering his belly for a washboard when Snow White starts housecleaning for the dwarfs, and the squirrels undoing cobwebs with their tails are but understatements of the very touching love for Snow White which they share with a helpless audience. Then there are the dwarfs—in their seven foolish ways as irresistible as the heroine, and of course no less devoted to her than the animals are; though one of them, Grumpy, remains a misogynist almost to the end. Mr. Disney's triumph with them, like all his other triumphs, is one of understanding. His technique, about which I know little, must of course be wonderful; but the main thing is that he lives somewhere near the human center and knows innumerable truths that cannot be taught. That is why his ideas look like inspirations, and why he can be good-hearted without being sentimental, can be ridiculous without being fatuous. With him, as with any first-rate artist, we feel that we are in good hands; we can trust him with our hearts and wits.

MARK VAN DOREN

RECORDS

A large number of readers, whom I thank collectively for their letters, have made known their wishes concerning this column. With one exception they prefer that I use my space for the records that are worth buying; from that point on they scatter. Some want a warning against an inadequate performance of an important work or a good performance of an unimportant work or a poor recording; others think I should not waste the space. Some want the comment to be extensive and detailed because they find it increases their understanding and discrimination; one asks me to limit myself to a concise statement about the performance and the recording and not to bother about the music.

Moreover, having taken pen in hand some writers go on to object to my giving space to jazz; an equal number ask me to give more space to it; and I will break the tie by saying that anyone with feeling for music should want to be told about trumpet-playing as beautifully imagined and sensitively phrased as Buck Clayton's (1) immediately after Billie Holiday's singing of "He's Funny That Way" (Vocalion 3748), and (2) at the beginning of the delightful "Good Morning Blues" of Count Basie's Orchestra (Decca 1446), which also provides a good introduction to Basie's distinctive piano-playing. He should want to know also about some of the old records of the incomparable Bessie Smith that Columbia has reissued in a special memorial album (six records, $5)—records that offer not only the singing of Bessie but the playing of outstanding jazz musicians like the pianist James P. Johnson in "Backwater Blues," the cornettist Joe Smith and the pianist Fletcher Henderson in "Weeping Willow Blues" and "Yellow Dog Blues," and Louis Armstrong in "St. Louis Blues" and "Reckless Blues." For my ears Armstrong has done nothing to equal his cornet obligatos in these records and in "Cold in Hand Blues," which has not been reissued and which you should clamor for.

There are suggestions to include comment on military-band

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Formerly of the Federal Department of Labor

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records, information about record-changing mechanisms, criticism of careless labeling of records—for example, Victor's putting the Clock Scene from "Boris Godunov" on the A side of a record and Boris's Monologue which precedes it on the B side. There is also a suggestion to omit: "I propose that you stop reviewing Columbia records entirely until the mechanical defects which you so properly keep remarking upon have been remedied. With their present abominable surfaces Columbia records aren't worth buying . . . and I for one never read the reviews of them. How a company can pursue such a suicidal policy is beyond me." And me.

"If you weren't so rabid against much of Brahms and Sibelius I'd think you were very fine. As it is, I must conclude that you haven't familiarized yourself enough with many of their works that you think so little of"—is the response of one of the more fanatical admirers of Brahms and Sibelius to my discriminating appreciation of these two composers; and a second otherwise highly approving letter ends with the plea, "But seem not splenetic about Brahms." And finally there are two complaints about the lateness of my reviews, one reader pointing out that by the time they appear he has already made his purchases. But if he wants the benefit of my judgment he can wait for it and gear his purchasing with my columns instead of with the companies' announcements.

As a matter of fact I would be discussing January releases now if the Victor special list had not intervened. I have not yet heard everything on the list, but so far it has given me my first experience, under ideal conditions, of three of the most beautiful works I have ever heard—works miraculous in their expressiveness and loveliness in the way that only Mozart's and Schubert's music can be: Mozart's Piano Concertos K. 450 (three records, $5) and K. 459 (3½ records, $7), and Schubert's Trio Opus 100 (five records, $10). By ideal conditions I mean superb performances: Elly Ney's of the Concerto K. 450, Schnabel's of K. 459, the Busch-Serkin Trio's of Schubert's Opus 100.

There are also superb performances by Hephzibah and Yehudi Menuhin and Maurice Eisenberg, excellently recorded, of Beethoven's Trio Opus 70 No. 1 (three records, $6.50) and Tchaikovsky's Trio Opus 50 (5½ records, $11); on the other hand the Busch Quartet, while it does better than the Lener with the first movement of Beethoven's Quartet Opus 131 (five records, $10), does less well with other movements; this work should have been done by the Budapest Quartet, which, with assisting artists, wastes magnificent playing on Brahms's Sextet Opus 36 (four records, $8). And other orchestral items are a fine performance of Mozart's "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" (two records, $3.50) by the Vienna Philharmonic under Walter, with recording that includes much reverberation; a not too precise performance, well recorded, of the Vivaldi-Bach Concerto for Four Pianos (two records, $3.50); and Sibelius's Third and Seventh Symphonies (seven records, $12), well played by the London Symphony under Kajanus and the B. B. C. Symphony under Koussevitzky, respectively, with the Seventh less well recorded at a concert than the Third in a studio.

If you are one of those who love the simple songs Carl Sandburg has done for Musicraft (four records, $4.50) you will dislike his affected singing of them. A good Musicraft release is Kathleen Long's performance of Mozart's Variations on a Theme of Gluck (two records, $3.00). And Timely offers (four records, $8) exemplary performances, by the New York Simfonietta under Max Goberman, of a charming Quartet by Stamitz, a Concertino by Pergolesi of which the Andante movement is outstanding, and a dull Concerto Grosso by Locatelli.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

War and *The Nation*

Dear Sirs: For many years *The Nation* has stood for the very best in American liberalism. Its courageous opposition to participation in the World War and its defense of civil liberties then and later are bright pages in the history of that tradition.

But with a dangerous war spirit abroad in the land today, we are dismayed to find *The Nation* aligning itself with those forces, both of the right and of the left, which are pushing this country toward war. The Neutrality Act is a piece of democratic legislation expressing the will of the American people to keep out of war. The Administration has failed to invoke this act in the present Sino-Japanese conflict, and *The Nation* has editorially indorsed this failure. Had this act been invoked and its clearly implied purpose carried out, such a dangerous "incident" as the Panay bombing would have been unlikely. In commenting on this incident, *The Nation* seems to have ignored the embarrassing fact that at the time of the attack the Panay was convoying three Standard Oil tankers. Indeed, in its editorial of December 18 these tankers were actually described as "three American ships containing American refugees." Is this liberalism?

In this crisis *The Nation* has espoused an ambiguous policy of "collective security." If such a policy is not backed up by the willingness to use armed force, it is an empty threat and a program of rhetoric and wind. But if economic sanctions *are* implemented by military sanctions, *The Nation* itself has admitted that the result may be war. And war in defense of what? Of democracy? Of American civilization? Or of the interests of big business? *The Nation* for January 1 states editorially: "For years foreigners have enjoyed extraterritorial rights in China. In abrogating them the Japanese have virtually closed the Open Door in China, since few foreigners will care to do business —or indeed be able to—under the arbitrary supervision of the Japanese militarists. For these reasons, if for no others, we cannot believe that the State Department will bow to the latest Japanese decree." The journal which in 1917 so courageously exposed the economic motives behind our participation in the war, today in effect calls on the State Department to risk war to protect the scandalous extraterritorial rights of American imperialism in China.

We believe that the first result of another War to Make the World Safe for Democracy will be the establishment of virtual fascism in this country. Is it patriotism, under the guise of warding off the remote possibility of fascist invasion, to prepare the way for domestic despotism? And is it logical to combat fascism by methods which are certain to introduce it?

The issue is as clear as it is critical. Will *The Nation* continue to defend "collective security," with all the risk of war involved in such a policy? Or will it reassert its traditional opposition to *all* war and war-mongering, whether of the right or of the left? As readers, as contributors, as friends of *The Nation,* we protest against what seems to us a betrayal of its splendid liberal tradition. We hope the editors will reconsider their position on this crucial issue.

(*Signed*) THOMAS H. BENTON, ALFRED M. BINGHAM, ANITA BRENNER, JOHN CHAMBERLAIN, BERNARD C. CLAUSEN, LEWIS COREY, CARROLL R. DAUGHERTY, H. C. ENGELBRECHT, JAMES T. FARRELL, JOHN T. FLYNN, MARY FOX, RICHARD T. FRANKENSTEEN, CLINTON S. GOLDEN, LOUIS M. HACKER, MAURITZ A. HALLGREN, FRANK HANIGHEN, ABRAM L. HARRIS, FRANCIS HENSON, SIDNEY HOOK, QUINCY HOWE, SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE, WILLIAM POTTER LAGE, HARRY W. LAIDLER, FREDERICK J. LIBBY, DWIGHT MACDONALD, HOMER MARTIN, MARY MCCARTHY, ERNEST L. MEYER, A. J. MUSTE, LOUIS NELSON, GERALD P. NYE, PHILIP RAHV, JAMES RORTY, HAROLD RUTTENBERG, DAVID SAPOSS, MEYER SHAPIRO, ROSE STEIN, WILLIAM T. STONE, NORMAN THOMAS, LIONEL TRILLING, EDMUND WILSON, BERTRAM D. WOLFE, MOLLY YARD, CHARLES S. ZIMMERMAN, N. A. ZONARICH.

[We agree that the issues dealt with in the letter above are among the most vital that the American people face today. But we believe that it is both false and dangerous to assume that the United States can escape war by taking steps, such as invoking the Neutrality Act, without regard to their practical effect on the world as a whole. Is it not possible that the aid and comfort given to aggressors by the unneutral features of the act would serve to bring war much nearer?

There is nothing "ambiguous" in *The Nation's* support of collective security. We have consistently maintained that if the drift toward war is to be checked, collective economic restraints are essential. We do not admit for a moment that this policy must be backed up by military sanctions, or that it involves a serious risk of war. It is one thing to say, as many do, that military cooperation between the democracies might stave off a world conflict under the present circumstances; and quite another to say, as we have said repeatedly, that in the long run peace can only be assured by the development of a non-violent technique for the enforcement of law. It is precisely this which the isolationists, including many of the signers of this letter, have opposed on many occasions.

In order to keep the record straight, we should like to add that the Standard Oil tankers sunk with the Panay did carry both American and Chinese refugees, and that the quotation on extraterritoriality was simply a statement of what appeared to be the facts in the situation. There was not, even by implication, a suggestion that the United States should go to war to protect its imperialist interests.

Nor was there an implicit defense of extraterritoriality. For years *The Nation* has advocated the surrender of American extraterritorial rights and special privileges in China. We have not retreated from this position. But there is an important distinction between restoring full sovereignty to China and urging the American government to retreat from its traditional position in the East merely because it is challenged by Japan. Surrender of American special privileges in China at the present moment would be of no service to China, but would merely demonstrate to the Japanese militarists and other would-be aggressors the efficacy of war as an instrument of national policy.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Persecution and the Press

Dear Sirs: The case of Marcus Graham contains a clear threat to the freedom of the press, since his arrest and the resumption of deportation proceedings against him, on an order dated more than eighteen years ago, are indirect attempts to stifle the publication *Man,* of which he is editor.

A philosophic anarchist, Graham was first arrested in 1919 and ordered deported to Canada. But on his refusal to give the details of his birth on the ground that the proceeding was illegal, Canada refused to accept him. In 1921 he was rearrested and imprisoned by the Labor Department for six months. In 1930 the Labor Department again arrested him on the trumped-up charge of having crossed the United States border to Mexico without a permit.

Then followed official harassment of the monthly publication *Man.* Subscribers were visited by immigration inspectors and threatened with prosecution unless they canceled their subscriptions. In October, 1937, when Graham was again rearrested, immigration inspectors searched his home without a warrant.

Now the Labor Department is planning to send Graham to jail unless he discloses information which he has consistently refused to give for over eighteen years. As a preliminary to this imprisonment, the department has secured an order from the United States District Court requiring Graham to submit this information. He has refused to do so. A charge of criminal contempt has already been filed against him.

The Southern California Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union has organized a Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee. The A. C. L. U. has furnished counsel to Graham and is sponsoring a civil suit for damages against the immigration officers. All believers in freedom should communicate immediately with James L. Houghteling, Commissioner of Immigration, Washington, D. C., urging a halt to this long campaign of persecution.

CLINTON J. TAFT, Director,
Southern California Branch, A. C. L. U.
Los Angeles, Cal., January 3

Democracy Begins at Home

Dear Sirs: Your proposals regarding the role that America should play in foreign affairs seem to me most unrealistic. To expect that the nations of the world would participate in any sort of "collective security" with all the attendant risks, responsibilities, and sacrifices, out of a desire to establish international law, order, and justice is naive and foolish. The chief motive operating behind the desire for collective coercion is not universal altruism but each nation's economic self-interest.

Our country does not have to cooperate indiscriminately with other nations in order to stop by force the spread of fascism, since that disease develops from internal irritations, not by contagion. And before we set about exporting our imagined surplus of democracy we should produce enough to satisfy the demand for it at home.

LESLIE CHRISMER

Ridley Park, Pa., January 17

Education by Night

Dear Sirs: A survey of conditions in the evening sessions of New York City's municipal colleges has just been completed by a joint committee of the Brooklyn College Evening Session Association and the New York College Teachers' Union (Local 537, A.F.T.). The survey reveals distressing exploitation of teachers and students in the evening sessions.

Nearly 24,000 students, 87 per cent of whom are matriculated for a degree, are taking their college work in the evening, for the most part because they are holding jobs, or looking for them, in the daytime. These worker-students are crammed into large classes, find it difficult, if not impossible, to use the library—since library rules are designed for day students—get no free textbooks, no regular gymnasium courses, and are generally treated as college stepchildren.

Evening-session students are taught by a staff as well qualified on the average as day-session teachers, but forced to teach under circumstances in which their efficiency cannot be at a maximum. Some of the evening-session staff are day-session teachers who after finishing a day's stint tack on extra hours in the evening at half-pay. More than half of the evening-session staff are employed by the colleges in the evening session only, but because of low salary schedules they are forced to seek other employment to supplement their incomes. Evening-session teachers are paid at one-half the day-session rate. Further, evening-session teachers are paid on an hourly basis, a vestige of the days, thirty years ago, when the evening session was an extension division with unpredictable courses and irregularly attending students. This hourly system of pay excludes teachers from tenure rights and from the teachers' retirement system; it penalizes them for illness and holidays. Evening-session teachers are not promoted, and their salary increments are haphazard and rare. The average annual salary in the day session of Brooklyn College is $3,754.54; in the evening session, for approximately a half-day teaching schedule, it is $720.

A meeting of all evening-session teachers has been called by several teacher organizations for Saturday afternoon, January 22, at the Twenty-third Street branch of the City College, to discuss a program of action for the correction of these abuses.

EDWIN B. BURGUM
President, New York
College Teachers' Union

New York, January 12

CONTRIBUTORS

M. E. RAVAGE, *The Nation's* Paris correspondent, is at present visiting the United States.

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